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General and complete disarmament

Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures

Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report describes activities undertaken by States and regional and subregional organizations to consolidate peace through practical disarmament measures.

It also summarizes the activities undertaken at the national, regional and subregional levels by the United Nations, States and organizations that are in a position to do so to provide assistance to States in their efforts to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and in collecting and disposing of them.

In addition, it provides an overview of the implementation by the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and States of General Assembly resolution 62/47, on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, including the work of the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

* A/63/150 and Corr.1.

** The late submission of the present report is due to the fact that its completion was contingent upon the outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

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The report covers the period from July 2007 to July 2008, except for the section on the consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures, which covers the period from July 2006 to July 2008.

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I. Introduction

1. Convinced that a comprehensive and integrated approach to certain practical disarmament measures is often a prerequisite to maintaining and consolidating peace and security, in its resolution 61/76, entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures", the General Assembly encouraged Member States, including the Group of Interested States, to continue to lend their support to the Secretary-General, relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, and non-governmental organizations, in responding to requests by Member States to collect and destroy small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, in post-conflict situations. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit, for its consideration at its sixty-third session, a report on the implementation of practical disarmament measures, taking into consideration the activities of the Group of Interested States in this regard.

2. Deeply concerned by the magnitude of human casualty and suffering, especially among children, caused by the illicit proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons in its resolution 62/22, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them", the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General and those States and organizations that are in a position to do so to continue to provide assistance to States to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to consider the matter and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.

3. Emphasizing the importance of the continued and full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects,[1] adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in its resolution 62/47, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", the General Assembly called upon all Member States to contribute to the continued implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels. It also called upon all States to implement the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument)[2] and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

4. The present report is submitted pursuant to the requests made by the General Assembly in the above-mentioned resolutions.

II. Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures

5. The present section of the report covers the period from July 2006 to July 2008. During the reporting period, the Group of Interested States in Practical

[1] See *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, New York, 9-20 July 2001* (A/CONF.192/15), chap. IV, para. 24.

[2] A/60/88 and Corr.2, annex; see also General Assembly decision 60/519.

Disarmament Measures held three meetings, on 13 July 2006, 16 October 2007 and 26 March 2008. At its 2006 meeting the Group reviewed its mandate in the light of the overlap with some of the activities included in the Programme of Action. The Group decided to extend its assistance to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are involved in projects dealing with practical disarmament measures. In this connection, during the same meeting, the Group considered a request for assistance from the African Peace Forum, an NGO that was conducting a project on training in small arms, as part of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in Southern Sudan. The project subsequently received funding from the Governments of Canada and Germany.

6. At its 2007 meeting, the Group of Interested States resolved to refocus on its original activities. These include the examination of and, where possible, provision of joint support for concrete projects for practical disarmament, in particular disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, weapons collection programmes, demining, conversion and public awareness campaigns as initiated and designed by affected countries. The Group engages in exchanging information on lessons learned in the field of practical disarmament and their dissemination to interested States.

7. In this regard, the Group decided to develop two lists, one showing donor-preferred areas for funding and the second showing projects from countries that need funding. The objective of the lists was to match donor countries with recipient countries. This concept was later incorporated in the Programme of Action Implementation Support System, developed by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, with partial funding from the Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures, which was established by the Secretary-General in 1998 to support the activities of the Group of Interested States.

8. At its meeting in March 2008, the Group of Interested States considered a funding proposal from the Nairobi-based Regional Centre on Small Arms to support various practical disarmament projects in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the Sudan.

9. Meanwhile, in response to a request from the Secretariat for information on activities undertaken in the area of practical disarmament measures, 12 States[3] submitted reports that included information on assistance received or extended in the following areas: capacity-building of national institutions dealing with small arms and light weapons; collection and destruction of surplus and illicit small arms and light weapons; destruction and demilitarization of ammunition; support for civil society with a view to enhancing its capacity to assist in combating illicit small arms and light weapons; support for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in some of the countries emerging from conflict; and the disarmament of illegal armed groups in countries that are not in conflict.

10. In addition to assistance extended by some members of the Group of Interested States, during the reporting period, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided support to over 15 States worldwide in the area of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Additionally, it initiated and led several joint missions with other United Nations agencies and departments in the fields of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform, gender and

[3] Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Greece, Jordan, Lebanon, Mexico, Netherlands, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Serbia and Ukraine.

early recovery, thus increasing synergies between country programmes. In the Sudan, UNDP, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) coordinated their efforts in supporting the set-up stages of a national strategy for four specific disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, which will be complemented by community security and small arms control initiatives.

III. Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them

11. During the reporting period, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs continued to support the Sri Lanka National Commission against the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms, through a joint project under the auspices of the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism. In the framework of this project, during the reporting period the Sri Lanka National Commission undertook the following activities: a national small arms and light weapons survey, designed and implemented in partnership with Saferworld; the design and launch of a database of firearms in civilian possession; and the organization of a series of seminars aimed at raising awareness among police organizations in various provinces of the country on issues related to small arms and light weapons. It is expected that a national action plan will be developed on the basis of the recommendations from the national small arms and light weapons survey. During the reporting period, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime also provided support to the Guinea-Bissau National Commission on Small Arms, in the framework of another project under the auspices of CASA. The two projects, both of which were funded through voluntary contributions from the Government of Japan, run from 2003 to 2008 and from 2007 to 2010, respectively.

12. Through its United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, the Office for Disarmament Affairs assisted the Togolese National Commission against Small Arms with the destruction of illicit ammunition. In addition, the Centre provided technical assistance for a subregional project launched in 2007 by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Small Arms Control Programme in Togo. The project is aimed at sensitizing the population to the dangers posed by small arms and light weapons, strengthening the capacity of the National Commission in record-keeping and stockpile management, and assisting in the conduct of surveys on the circulation of arms and their impact in Togo.[4]

13. Meanwhile, in a concerted effort to assist the Government of Jamaica in the elaboration and implementation of a comprehensive national strategy to reduce armed violence and curb illicit firearms trafficking, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, through its Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, conducted a series of courses and workshops for civil society organizations and community leaders in Jamaica, held in November and December 2007 and May 2008. The Centre also carried out the first-of-its-kind

[4] See A/63/163.

firearms baseline study in Jamaica, aimed at enhancing the training of the law enforcement community in the country, as well as generating inputs for other activities related to the implementation of the Jamaican national security policy programme supported by UNDP and the Regional Centre. In addition, the Regional Centre assisted the Government of Peru in removing close to 20,000 firearms from circulation. It also provided technical assistance to the Governments of Paraguay and Uruguay on best practices in stockpile management and security in storage facilities, including through the provision of guidelines on safe and secure integrated management of storage facilities.[5]

IV. Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

A. United Nations system

Security Council

14. In a presidential statement issued on 29 June 2007[6] the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to submit for its consideration a report on small arms containing his analysis, observations and recommendations, as well as his observations on the implementation of the Programme of Action. On 30 April 2008, the Council held an open debate at which it considered the Secretary-General's report on small arms (S/2008/258).[7] The report focused on the negative impact of illicit small arms on security, human rights and social and economical development, in particular in areas of crisis and (post-) conflict situations, and provided an analysis of the implementation of existing international instruments for preventing the illicit proliferation of small arms, such as the Programme of Action and the United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition (United Nations Firearms Protocol).

15. The report outlined a series of recommendations, in respect of such matters as the development of measurable goals for reducing armed violence; fostering enhanced cooperation between national authorities; enhancing synergies between various bodies on the issue, including the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission; exploring possibilities for further improving the monitoring of Security Council arms embargoes; developing forms of standardization of end-user certificates and improving their verification; drawing urgent attention to the issues of destruction of surplus ammunition stockpiles and stockpile management; capacity-building; and the further strengthening of coordination on the issue within the United Nations system.

16. The debate reaffirmed the relevance of small arms as a cross-cutting issue for the majority of matters considered by the Security Council. In addition to the open debate on small arms, the Council also held a number of debates on other issues

[5] See A/63/157.

[6] S/PRST/2007/24.

[7] See S/PV.5881 and resumption 1.

with a small arms nexus, such as children and armed conflict, civilians and armed conflict, and women and peace and security.

General Assembly

17. By its resolution 62/47, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to collate and circulate data and information provided by States on a voluntary basis, including national reports on their implementation of the Programme of Action (see para. 3 above) and on the International Tracing Instrument, as well as information received on the efforts of States to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons and on actions aimed at enhancing international cooperation for that purpose. Pursuant to that request, the Office for Disarmament Affairs received a total of 109 reports during the reporting period, of which 104 also included information on the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument, while 84 also included information on activities related to curbing illicit brokering.[8]

Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

18. In its resolution 62/47, the General Assembly decided to convene a Third Biennial Meeting of States to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action, in New York, from 14 to 18 July 2008. In the same resolution, the Assembly also decided that the meeting of States to consider the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument would be held within the framework of the Biennial Meeting. The Third Biennial Meeting was chaired by Dalius Čekuolis, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations.

19. That Biennial Meeting was the first of the global follow-up meetings under the Programme of Action to produce a substantive outcome.[9] The outcome highlights various recommendations as a "way forward" for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action. The Biennial Meeting also produced an outcome document on the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument, which was included as an annex to the report of the Meeting.

20. Consideration of the implementation of the Programme of Action was conducted through interactive discussions centred on the following items: (a) international cooperation, assistance and national capacity-building; (b) stockpile management and surplus disposal; (c) illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons; and (d) other issues, including those mentioned in paragraph 18 of the report of the Second Biennial Meeting of States,[10] and the identification of priority issues or topics of relevance to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and of their implementation challenges and opportunities.

21. Under the agenda item "International cooperation, assistance and national capacity-building", States discussed the efforts undertaken by recipient and donor

[8] The national reports are available on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs (http://disarmament.un.org/CAB/salw-nationalreports.html).

[9] See A/CONF.192/BMS/2008/3, para. 24.

[10] A/CONF.192/BMS/2005/1.

States to promote information exchange, practical cooperation, national experiences and lessons learned, as well as the role played by international, regional, subregional and civil society organizations in providing assistance to States in building their capacity for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action. They also considered steps to enhance multilateral mechanisms for matching needs with available resources. In this regard, States stressed the importance of regional approaches to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the usefulness of convening regional meetings sponsored by States and international, regional and subregional organizations that are in a position to do so. They also encouraged the active involvement of civil society organizations in such meetings.

22. In addition, States highlighted a number of measures that they considered essential for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action, such as enhancing practical cooperation among law enforcement, judicial, border and customs agencies; facilitating technology transfer and the implementation of regional instruments; and the need for recipient States to develop the capacity to assess their assistance needs.

23. Under the agenda item "Stockpile management and surplus disposal", States recognized that poorly managed and inadequately secured stockpiles pose a serious security threat. In this respect, they stressed the need for raising awareness among relevant national authorities of the critical importance of putting in place adequate systems and procedures for national stockpile management. States also highlighted a number of measures to improve stockpile management, including revising national stockpile management policies and putting in place adequate stockpile management systems; enhancing cooperation and the exchange of information on national experiences; the development of practical guidelines for national stockpile management; and the provision of technical and financial support to build the capacity of affected States to adequately manage their stockpiles of small arms and light weapons.

24. Regarding illicit brokering, States reaffirmed that the problem of illicit brokering needed to be urgently addressed by the international community. In this regard, they underscored the need to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons.[11] They further underscored a number of measures for the way forward, including the development of adequate national legislation or administrative procedures regulating brokering activities; international cooperation and assistance; and national capacity-building to address the problem. States also undertook to consider working to implement the recommendations of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering in order to reach agreements and establish mechanisms to find effective solutions to the problem.

25. Under the agenda item "Other issues, including those issues mentioned in paragraph 18 of the report of the Second Biennial Meeting of States (A/CONF.192/BMS/2005/1), and identification of priority issues or topics of relevance in the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and of their implementation challenges and opportunities", States expressed views on a wide range of issues that they consider of importance for the implementation of the

[11] A/62/163 and Corr.1.

Programme of Action. They also emphasized the importance of national reporting for the full implementation of the Programme of Action. In addition, they considered various ideas and proposals for a forward-looking implementation agenda for the Programme of Action, including: reporting on a biennial basis; the development of reporting templates and the analysis of reports; and follow-up meetings on the Programme of Action, including meetings of governmental experts and regional meetings that could be used to support future United Nations meetings on the Programme of Action.

International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons

26. During the discussion on the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument, States considered the extent to which they had succeeded in enacting national regulations and procedures for marking small arms and light weapons at the time of their manufacture and/or importation. They underscored that the marking of small arms and light weapons at the time of import could greatly facilitate the tracing of illicit weapons and called for assistance to be provided to non-manufacturing States. It was noted that a number of States had sought assistance to improve their national record-keeping capacity, particularly in terms of acquiring relevant hardware and software, as well as training in records management. With regard to cooperation in tracing, States welcomed the fact that a significant number of countries had nominated national points of contact for the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument. They also highlighted the importance of training law enforcement officials in the identification and tracing of small arms. They emphasized the importance of international cooperation and assistance, in particular national capacity-building for the effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument.

27. With a view to ensuring the full and effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument, States agreed to a number of measures, including: bringing national laws, regulations and administrative procedures into line with the Instrument; including in the national reports, as appropriate, information on national experiences in tracing illicit small arms and light weapons; supporting the role of the United Nations in promoting the Instrument and in building national capacity; supporting the role of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) in assisting in the implementation of the Instrument, including further development and promotion of the INTERPOL Weapons and Explosives Tracking System and other mechanisms aimed at facilitating tracing; making use of and supporting the web-based Programme of Action Implementation Support System (see para. 7 above); and cooperating with civil society in efforts to advance the implementation of the Instrument.

28. In an effort to promote the International Tracing Instrument, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, in collaboration with INTERPOL, organized four regional workshops aimed at enhancing understanding of the implications for States of the provisions of the Instrument; familiarizing relevant officials with some of the technical tools available for assisting States in tracing illicit small arms and light weapons, including those tools developed by INTERPOL; exchanging national experiences; and initiating an assessment of national assistance needs for the implementation of the Instrument. The workshops, which covered a total of 77 States, were held as follows: 10 and 11 December 2007, in Nairobi, for States of

North, East and Southern Africa; 17 and 18 April 2008, in Lomé, for States of West and Central Africa; 27 and 28 May 2008, in Seoul, for States of Asia and the Pacific; and 11 and 12 June 2008, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for States of Latin America and the Caribbean.

29. Financial support for the workshops was provided by the European Union and the Governments of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Japan, Norway and the Republic of Korea. The Governments of the Republic of Korea and of Brazil hosted and co-organized the workshop for Asia and the Pacific and the workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean, respectively. In addition, both Governments contributed expertise to the workshops.

30. At the conclusion of each of the above-mentioned workshops, participants noted that the workshops were very useful in raising awareness of the Instrument and in enhancing understanding of the actions that need to be carried out by States in order to fulfil their commitments under it. In this connection, they also expressed the wish that similar workshops be organized in the future with a view to enhancing the capacity of States to implement the Instrument.

United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms

31. During the reporting period, two important initiatives were launched under the auspices of the CASA mechanism: the development of the Programme of Action Implementation Support System, which succeeded the CASA database initiated in 2005, and the development of international small arms control standards, which are not unlike the international mine action standards and the integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards developed within the United Nations system. The Implementation Support System serves as an electronic "one-stop shop" for information on the implementation of the Programme of Action and as an integrated clearing house for international cooperation and assistance, including matching assistance needs with available resources. The development of the international small arms control standards is a two-year project aimed at developing a harmonized and holistic response to the numerous challenges posed by the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms. Such standards would improve the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of voluntary programmes and activities in the field of small arms control.

Office for Disarmament Affairs: regional centres

32. During the period under review, the Training the Trainers Public Security Project, which is being implemented by the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, expanded its scope to focus on border management and customs. Courses were held in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela from 19 to 30 November 2007 and in the Dominican Republic from 16 to 27 June 2008. Standardized courses on investigative techniques and regional information exchange were also carried out in Brazil, Colombia, Jamaica, Paraguay and Uruguay. In total, 1,100 officials from the seven States mentioned above received training during the reporting period. In addition, from 7 to 11 April 2008, the Regional Centre held its Regional Information Exchange Course in Bogotá, focusing on exchange of best practices on transparency measures, intelligence-gathering and regional cooperation. That course was attended

by law enforcement officials from States of Latin America and the Caribbean, the United States of America and Europe.

33. The Regional Centre also assisted Bolivia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Panama and Peru in the development of national firearms legislation and its harmonization with the various international firearms instruments. As a follow-up to the adoption in 2006 of the Geneva Declaration and in 2007 of the Declaration of Guatemala on Armed Violence and Development, the Centre, in collaboration with UNDP, organized a seminar for States of the Central American region in Antigua, Guatemala, from 28 to 30 April 2008, to exchange best practices on the implementation of the two Declarations. In November 2007, in partnership with the Organization of American States, the Centre organized a national workshop in Lima for 60 law enforcement officials involved in the verification and destruction of seized, decommissioned and surplus firearms. The workshop was followed by the destruction of more than 15,000 firearms between December 2007 and June 2008.

34. Meanwhile, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa continued collecting data on small arms and light weapons and maintained a regional database and Small Arms and Light Weapons Register for Africa, as a follow-up activity to the Small Arms Transparency and Control Regime in Africa project. In this regard, the Regional Centre encouraged participating States to submit reports on small arms and light weapons import, export and manufacture in order to promote transparency and confidence-building among African States.

35. On 20 and 21 September 2007, the Regional Centre held a training workshop for the Togolese National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, focusing on best practices concerning marking, record-keeping and tracing in respect of small arms and light weapons. As a result of the workshop, these issues were included in the Togolese awareness campaign launched later in the year. On 24 September 2007, the Regional Centre organized a training workshop for the Togolese National Commission, focusing on stockpile management and security procedures. As a result of that workshop, the Togolese authorities requested assistance from the Government of the United States of America to build a storage facility and signed an agreement to that effect in July 2008. In addition, the Centre assisted the Togolese National Commission in the destruction of several thousand illicit arms and ammunition in an event that took place on 31 October 2007.

36. As part of its substantive secretariat support services to the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the Regional Centre launched a project aimed at promoting the control of small arms and light weapons in the Central African region. The project, implemented in collaboration with the Economic Community of Central African States, is expected to result in 2009 in the adoption, by the 11 States members of the Standing Advisory Committee, of a legally binding instrument on small arms and an implementation plan. As part of its activities in support of civil society organizations, the Regional Centre provided capacity-building support to the West Africa Action Network on Small Arms through its participation in the review and validation process of the network's strategic plan for 2007-2017. The process culminated in a workshop held in Accra in December 2007.

Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate

37. The Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate continued monitoring the implementation by Member States of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which stipulates that States shall eliminate the supply of weapons to terrorists. To this end, the Executive Directorate has developed a number of tools, including the preliminary implementation assessment, which is aimed at reducing the reporting burden of Member States. During the reporting period, the Counter-Terrorism Committee adopted 175 preliminary implementation assessments of Member States and conducted 27 on-site visits to Member States.

38. In addition, the Counter-Terrorism Committee held its fifth special meeting with international, regional and subregional organizations, on the theme "Prevention of terrorist movement and effective border security". The meeting, held in Nairobi from 29 to 31 October 2007, agreed on a plan of action by which participants decided to continue to work with Member States on the adoption and implementation of international standards to combat illegal arms trafficking and to eliminate the supply of weapons to terrorists.

United Nations Children's Fund

39. On 1 October 2007, UNICEF co-hosted with France a follow-up ministerial meeting on the Paris Commitments and Principles, adopted in February 2007. As a result of that meeting, an additional seven States expressed support for the Commitments, raising to 66 the number of States endorsing commitments for children associated with armed forces or armed groups. In March 2008, in partnership with the Jamaican Ministry of National Security, UNICEF, UNDP and the Violence Prevention Alliance co-hosted a multi-country consultation in Jamaica on the impact of small arms on children and their communities.

40. UNICEF continued to collaborate with partners in a number of States in programmes for the reintegration of demobilized child soldiers and war-affected children. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF continued to support the protection of children through research and education on small arms and mine risk. Furthermore, UNICEF supported a four-country research project on the impact of small arms on children and adolescents in El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. The key findings provide evidence of the negative impact of small arms on children, make general and country-specific recommendations for action and outline best practices for interventions. The report calls for commitment by all actors to counter armed violence, support coordination and arms control measures, and provide treatment and rehabilitation of child victims. At the global level, the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, which is chaired by UNICEF, developed a joint training strategy during the reporting period.

Department of Peacekeeping Operations

41. The integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards, a United Nations-wide set of policies, guidelines and tools for carrying out disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, were launched in December 2006. Since then, several challenges in the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes have come to light, including linking disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes with other post-conflict

peacebuilding and recovery efforts, such as initiatives on small arms control. In view of those challenges, a more holistic approach, known as community violence reduction, has been implemented. During the reporting period, the community violence reduction approach was used by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, with the aim of addressing the root causes of violence and fostering small arms control measures, such as the development of a weapons registry and an appropriate regulatory framework on small arms.

United Nations Development Fund for Women

42. As a part of the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) continued to support the implementation of the United Nations integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards and related training initiatives. At the country level, UNIFEM continued to work with organizations of former female combatants on issues of gender-based violence prevention, economic security and HIV/AIDS. This has been the case particularly in the Great Lakes region of Africa, where UNIFEM has long-standing partnerships with women's organizations. In Uganda, for instance, the work of UNIFEM has focused primarily on supporting women's engagement in the peace process and on ensuring that gender equality measures and women's concerns are adequately reflected in implementation agreements for the post-conflict reconstruction phase, including in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plans. In Colombia, UNIFEM continued to support the compilation of good practices and lessons learned related to the impact of the disarmament process on women, both as former combatants and as members of returning communities.

United Nations Development Programme

43. UNDP provided extensive support to more than 30 countries worldwide to address the many challenges associated with the illicit trade and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. With a view to enhancing synergies in country programming, UNDP initiated and led several joint missions with other United Nations agencies and departments in the fields of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform, gender and early recovery. For instance, in the Sudan, UNDP, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNICEF coordinated their efforts to support the set-up stages of a national strategy for four specific disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, which will be complemented by community security and small arms control initiatives.

44. As a follow-up to the ministerial summit that adopted the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development in June 2006, the Swiss Government, with the support of UNDP, organized regional meetings in Antigua, Guatemala (April 2007), Nairobi (October 2007) and Bangkok (May 2008). The primary objective of these meetings was to promote the Geneva Declaration among States of the different regions and to increase awareness of the linkages between armed violence and the challenges to sustainable development.

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

45. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) successfully completed its project on international assistance for the implementation

of the Programme of Action. The study surveyed the types of assistance that States would need to support their implementation of the Programme of Action. The third phase of the project, which is currently under way, is a web-based tool for matching assistance needs to available resources. This tool will be integrated into the Programme of Action Implementation Support System in the near future.

46. In support of the preparations for the Third Biennial Meeting of States, UNIDIR, in collaboration with UNDP, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Small Arms Survey, carried out an analysis of national reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action. The results of the analysis were presented in a draft report entitled "Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons: analysis of the national reports submitted by States from 2002 to 2008", which was included in the background documentation for the Biennial Meeting. Funding for this project was provided by the Governments of Japan and Switzerland.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

47. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime continued promoting the universal ratification of the United Nations Firearms Protocol and provided legislative and technical assistance to States seeking to ratify and implement it, including the development of guidelines to assist Member States with the implementation of the control measures outlined in the Protocol. During the period under review, 11 States joined the Protocol, bringing the total number of States parties to 72, as at May 2008.

48. In Colombia, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime continued the implementation of the project entitled "Preventing and combating the illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms and ammunition to prevent crime and promote a culture of peace in Colombia", which is aimed at helping to prevent crime through the strengthening of preventive measures on illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms and ammunition. Furthermore, the Office assisted the Colombian Government in the destruction of over 16,000 firearms that were seized or handed over by members of insurgent groups in the process of their reintegration into civil life. In addition, it worked in close cooperation with local authorities and youth organizations in the development of a national campaign to prevent violence.

49. In partnership with the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre and the South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime organized the Conference on Firearms Control Initiatives in South-East Europe, in Zagreb, from 22 to 24 April 2008. The purpose of the event was to provide a forum for States of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe to share national experiences in regulating and preventing the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms and ammunition and to assess the status of implementation of their obligations under the Firearms Protocol. Thirty-three senior officials representing 11 States of the subregion participated in the Conference. Also during the reporting period, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime began developing a programme to enhance understanding of the organized criminal networks involved in illicit firearms trafficking and other related forms of trafficking and to help address this problem.

B. Activities undertaken at the regional and subregional levels

Africa

50. ECOWAS reports that, in partnership with the West African Action Network on Small Arms and the national commissions on small arms and light weapons, its Commission conducted campaigns in ECOWAS member States aimed at raising public awareness of the negative impact of small arms and light weapons and advocating the ratification of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, adopted on 14 June 2006. Through the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme, the ECOWAS Commission continued to strengthen its effort to institutionalize the national commissions on small arms and light weapons and to build their capacity. In this regard, the Commission has been supporting national commissions with equipment and funds for the implementation of priority activities. In addition, ECOWAS, through its Small Arms Control Programme, convened the second annual consultative meeting of national commissions on small arms and light weapons on 3 and 4 July 2008.

51. During the reporting period, the ECOWAS Commission engaged in the process of developing guidelines for the harmonization of legislation and administrative procedures on small arms and light weapons. It also developed a comprehensive draft plan of action for the implementation of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, with the support of the European Commission and the Government of Canada. The plan of action was approved by member States during the meeting of governmental experts, in Lomé from 16 to 18 June 2008.

52. The Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons reports that in December 2007, the General Assembly of the United Nations granted it observer status. In an effort to assist its 12 member States in implementing their international and regional commitments in the area of small arms and light weapons, the Regional Centre, with the financial support of Germany and the United States of America, provided its member States with an electronic machine for marking small arms and two computers each to boost their national marking and record-keeping capacity. In connection with this project, the Regional Centre organized a regional workshop on small arms and light weapons marking and record-keeping in Mombasa, Kenya, from 31 March to 4 April 2008. It also organized a seminar on man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), in Nairobi from 1 to 2 July 2008. Finally, the Regional Centre continues to give priority to supporting the development of national action plans on small arms and light weapons among its member States.

Americas

53. The Organization of American States reports that during the reporting period, its General Assembly approved three pieces of model legislation covering the following areas: marking and tracing of firearms; legislative measures to establish criminal offences in relation to the illicit manufacturing of and/or trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials; and strengthening controls at export points. The aim of these models is to promote the adoption of legislative and other measures as part of the implementation of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. The Second Conference of States Parties to the Convention was held in Mexico City on 20 and 21 February

2008, providing an opportunity for States to exchange experiences and to discuss challenges, needs and ways in which to strengthen the implementation of the Convention.

Europe

54. The European Union reports that on 17 March 2008 the Council of the European Union adopted a Joint Action to support European Union activities to promote, among third-world countries, the control of arms exports and the principles and criteria of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. The Joint Action, organized by the Presidency of the European Council, allocated €500,500 from the European Union budget to fund seminars. It brings together experts from European Union member States and other interested States in the field of arms exports control. Beneficiaries will include the countries of South-Eastern Europe and North African, Mediterranean, Eastern European and Caucasian partners of the European Neighbourhood Policy. On 18 April 2008, the most recent version of the Common Military List of the European Union, which was adopted by the Council of the European Union on 10 March 2008, was published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*. The List describes twenty-two categories of military equipment covered by the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports.[12]

55. In addition, during the reporting period, European Union member States agreed to exchange information on a confidential basis on brokering licences granted (including licences for transfer of brokered goods). This agreement enhances the information-sharing commitments of the European Union Common Position on the control of arms brokering, adopted on 23 June 2003. With regard to marking and tracing, in May 2008 the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament amended the 1991 directive on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons in order to accommodate the provisions of the United Nations Firearms Protocol. That directive contains specific provisions on marking, tracing and record-keeping within the European Community. In February 2008, the Council of the European Union adopted a Joint Action to support financially and politically three of the four regional workshops organized by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to promote the International Tracing Instrument (see paras. 26-30 above). The workshops funded by the European Union were held in Lomé, Seoul and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

56. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) continued to promote information-sharing among its members through annual as well as one-off and confidential information exchanges. In October 2007, the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation adopted decision 11/07, requesting participating States to exchange information, on a one-off basis by 25 January 2008, on their present regulations concerning brokering activities with regard to small arms and light weapons.

57. The South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons reports that during the reporting period, it developed regional micro-disarmament standards and guidelines on small arms and children (RMDS/G 06.20) and on small arms and light weapons and gender

[12] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/export-controls.

(RMDS/G 06.30). In addition, it developed an Excel-based weapons destruction planning matrix to support the contents of the RMDS/G 05.20, on the destruction of small arms and light weapons, and updated RMDS/G 06.10, on the development and implementation of small arms and light weapons awareness programmes. The Clearinghouse also put in place a regional strategy on gender issues in small arms control and armed violence prevention, and carried out research into firearms and domestic violence legislation throughout the Western Balkans. This research resulted in a regional comparative study that was completed at the end of 2007.

58. In addition, the Clearinghouse helped to initiate the joint OSCE/UNDP capacity development programme for small arms and light weapons (conventional ammunition) demilitarization and safe storage for Montenegro. A weapons registration and stockpile management software, developed by the Clearinghouse, became fully functional in the Ministry of Interior of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Furthermore, the Small Arms and Light Weapons Awareness Support Pack, which provides detailed guidance on how to develop, implement and monitor small arms awareness programmes, was updated.

C. Activities undertaken by intergovernmental organizations

59. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) reports that it continued to support projects for the safe destruction of stockpiles of small arms and light weapons and ammunition through its Partnership for Peace Trust Fund policy. Since the establishment of the Trust Fund policy in September 2000, a total of 20 Trust Fund projects have been launched, of which 9 have already been successfully completed. To date, the accomplishments of the Trust Fund projects include the destruction of more than 1.5 million small arms and light weapons, 145,000 tons of munitions and abandoned explosives, 1,400 MANPADS, 530 high-altitude anti-aircraft missiles, 4.1 million landmines and 1,500 tons of dangerous chemicals, including rocket fuel (mélange). Additionally, NATO has supported reintegration programmes. To date, over 5,000 former military personnel have received training and assistance through three Trust Fund projects, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Ukraine.

60. In a new initiative, NATO allies agreed at the Bucharest summit in April 2008 to raise the profile of its policies and contributions on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, which include efforts to fully implement the Programme of Action. Separately, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council members have agreed to expand the reach and scope of the NATO/Partnership for Peace Trust Fund mechanism to include States of the Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.[13]

61. The NATO Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and OSCE co-sponsored the Synergy Conference for Regional Organizations on the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Conference, held at NATO headquarters in Brussels from 28 to 30 May 2008, had as its main objectives the facilitation of synergies and the promotion of best practices

[13] The Mediterranean Dialogue was launched in 1994 and includes the member States of NATO and Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The Istanbul Commitment Initiative was launched at the NATO Istanbul summit in September 2004.

in implementing the Programme of Action between and among regional organizations and preparations for the Third Biennial Meeting of States (see paras. 18-25 above).

62. The Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies reports that during the reporting period, participating States continued the internal notification of transfers of small arms and light weapons in the form of semi-annual notifications of arms transfers. The Wassenaar Arrangement also contributed to best practices regarding small arms and light weapons and MANPADS by publishing in 2007 a document entitled "Best practices to prevent destabilizing transfers of small arms and light weapons through air transport". From 4 to 6 December 2007, the Wassenaar Arrangement held its 2007 plenary, where Participating States agreed to update the 2002 small arms and light weapons best practices to bring them into line with the International Tracing Instrument.

63. In July 2007, INTERPOL, at one of its biennial regional conferences, the 19th African Regional Conference, in Arusha, addressed the issue of small arms and light weapons in Africa, including illicit trade in the Great Lakes region. On 10 July 2007, Somalia successfully connected to the INTERPOL secure global police communications system, I-24/7. Somalia was the last of the 186 member States of INTERPOL to join the system. With regard to support for States in tracing illicit small arms and light weapons, INTERPOL continued the development of its Weapons and Explosives Tracking System and collaborated with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in the organization of four regional workshops to support the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument (see paras. 26-30 above).

V. Conclusions

64. The unprecedented adoption of an outcome document at the Third Biennial Meeting of States constituted a concrete reaffirmation of the commitment of Member States to the full implementation of the Programme of Action and the adoption of a more results-oriented approach to global follow-up meetings. The discussions at the Biennial Meeting emphasized the critical importance of international cooperation and assistance in all areas addressed by the Programme of Action. The meeting also highlighted the need for States to implement the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons and to put in place measures to improve the management of stockpiles.

65. During the reporting period, the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument was one of the priorities of States in the area of small arms and light weapons. The regional workshops organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs underscored the need for continued efforts to promote the Instrument and to develop concrete projects aimed at building the capacity of States in the areas of marking, record-keeping and tracing. The workshops proved to be useful in enhancing the understanding of the provisions of the Instrument, familiarizing participants with the tracing tools available through INTERPOL and preparing for the consideration of the Instrument at the Third Biennial Meeting of States (see para. 18 above).

66. The importance of tools to facilitate the matching of assistance needs with resources has been emphasized by States as well as international, regional and civil society organizations. The Programme of Action Implementation Support System (see para. 7 above), being developed under the auspices of CASA, was welcomed by the Third Biennial Meeting of States as a useful tool in that regard. The Implementation Support System is expected to be instrumental in connecting States' needs with other States' resources. In doing so it will become the concrete tool for which the Group of Interested States — a forum that was conceived prior to the adoption of the Programme of Action — paved the way.

67. Intergovernmental organizations, including regional and subregional organizations, as well as civil society organizations, reported that they continued to play a critical role in supporting the implementation of the Programme of Action. During the reporting period these organizations implemented activities in a wide range of areas, including awareness-raising and advocacy, development of legislation, stockpile management, weapons collection and destruction, marking, and record-keeping. There has also been an increased effort to undertake joint projects involving various intergovernmental organizations and civil society and to enhance cooperation among regional and subregional organizations, as illustrated by the synergy conference referred to in paragraph 61 above.

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Culture of peace

Interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report highlights the activities carried out by key United Nations entities involved in the field of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/90. It provides information on the observance of the International Day of Non-violence and the International Day of Peace, and an overview of other regional and global initiatives taken in the fields of interreligious and intercultural dialogue. It should be read in conjunction with the annual progress report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010 (A/63/127).

* A/63/150.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 62/90, the General Assembly affirmed that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and of the culture of peace. The Assembly also emphasized the need to sustain the momentum generated by its High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, held on 4 and 5 October 2007. In the same resolution, the Assembly decided to declare 2010 the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and recommended that, during the course of the year, appropriate events be organized, inter alia, a high-level dialogue and/or informal interactive hearings with civil society. The present report is submitted in accordance with paragraph 9 of the same resolution, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The report should be read in conjunction with the annual progress report (A/63/127) prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), submitted in accordance with Assembly resolution 62/89. That comprehensive report presents the activities carried out by the United Nations system to promote and implement the Programme of Action on a culture of peace adopted by the General Assembly in September 1999.

3. For the sake of concision, the present document focuses on activities carried out by the United Nations actors that have played a direct role in the field under review, although with different focus and mandate, namely UNESCO, the Alliance of Civilizations, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Department of Public Information and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Other United Nations entities may have developed working relationships with cultural or faith-based organizations that have also contributed directly or indirectly to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

4. Information is provided in section V of the present report on the observance of the United Nations Day of Non-Violence and the International Day of Peace, in response to the request of the Assembly in its resolution 61/271.

II. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

5. UNESCO has carried out a high number of activities of direct relevance to General Assembly resolution 62/90, some of a cultural nature and others focused on the religious dimension of international dialogue.

A. Activities for the promotion of intercultural dialogue

6. In 2007, the General Conference adopted the medium-term strategy (2008-2013), which is structured around five overarching objectives, one of which is fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace. That

objective seeks to present the UNESCO comparative advantage in the promotion of cultural diversity and its corollary, dialogue among civilizations and cultures.

7. As intersectoral work holds particular promise for UNESCO in the context of the United Nations reform, the Organization will implement, during the biennium 2008-2009, 12 intersectoral platforms that focus on key challenges that require an interdisciplinary approach. One of the platforms, "Contributing to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures and a culture of peace", defines four objectives: the exploitation of the general and regional histories; the development of intercultural skills; engaging new voices in interfaith dialogue and in other spiritual traditions; and the media in favour of fostering dialogue and mutual understanding.

8. This intersectoral platform will seek, among other things, to foster the development of educational and pedagogical means aimed specifically at promoting, in particular among youth, knowledge of and respect for the diversity of beliefs, highlighting, when possible, the cross-cultural borrowings that have occurred throughout the ages between spiritual traditions in multicultural and pluri-religious societies.

9. More specifically, a series of activities has been launched to contribute to a better understanding of the challenges posed by the interaction between cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue on the one hand, and the strengthening of efforts to combat cultural, ethnic and religious prejudices, on the other. In the first six months, efforts have been made both to continue long-standing programmes and to launch new projects. During this biennium there is continuing emphasis on two types of approach, one with a thematic focus and the other with a geographical focus.

10. The efforts made with a thematic approach include regular progress with the project on general and regional histories and their use, particularly African history, for teaching purposes. In the same vein, considerable progress has been made with the Slave Route Project. Support has also been provided for the project to preserve the African liberation heritage (Independence in Africa: the African Liberation Heritage Programme): a consultative meeting was organized, in collaboration with the Government of Namibia, to discuss the modalities for implementation of the project in the countries concerned (Windhoek, February 2008). UNESCO continues to be actively involved in indigenous issues (i.e. attending the session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, held in New York in April 2008 and hosting the annual meeting of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, held in Paris from 15 to 17 September 2008). The organization contributes to the extent possible to the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force by giving greater support to intercultural and interreligious dialogue, recognized as an important element to counter extremism. Other projects include the elaboration of databases on good practices concerning innovative means of designing and conducting intercultural and interreligious dialogue; further expanding of the Power of Peace Network (utilization of the new media tools to connect people of the world to enhance mutual understanding and tolerance through discussions on issues of pluralism), the Initiative B@bel (promotion of universal access to multilingual information in cyberspace); and the SESAME project (involving scientists from the Arab region working together with Israeli scientists).

11. With this same thematic approach, several publications have been issued (including a teaching orientation guide for secondary schoolteachers on awareness-

raising for intercultural dialogue, UNESCO Office Beirut and Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO, 2008). For the purposes of capacity-building for decision makers and stakeholders in civil society, UNESCO co-organized, with the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the Islamic Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ISESCO), the Baku Forum in June 2008 in order to expand the role of women in intercultural dialogue. The organization also supported the creation of a website entitled "No Ghetto", hosted by young people to raise awareness of the principles of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

12. The regional and international project "Arabia Plan" is one of the geographically focused approaches that has been continued. The main events were a meeting and a concert (May 2008), organized in close collaboration with the Delegation of Argentina and the Arabia Plan consultative committee, to demonstrate how Arab music and Latin American music are related, including through the influence of the Iberian peninsula. UNESCO is also continuing implementation of its project on "The Image of the Other in Arabo-Islamic and European Textbooks". Lastly, the sixth regional Summit of Heads of State of South-East Europe took place in Athens in June 2008 on the subject of Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes in South-East Europe. These "roads of dialogue" offer a new opportunity to reinterpret history in an intercultural way in order to reach a shared understanding. The main objective of these Summits is to support the crucial role of culture in strengthening mutual confidence and understanding in the region.

13. The UNESCO Children's Performing Arts Festival of East Asia will take place in Gwanju, Republic of Korea, from 24 to 26 July 2008. The Director-General will participate in this event during his visit to Korea.

14. Collaboration with the Alliance of Civilizations has been reinforced through the signature of a memorandum of understanding on the occasion of the first Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, held in Madrid in January 2008. The memorandum describes four specific areas for the development of joint projects and activities: (a) developing educational, cultural and scientific contents that foster dialogue and mutual understanding; (b) intensifying intercultural exchanges among youth; (c) highlighting the role of the media in fostering dialogue and mutual understanding; and (d) establishing new multi-stakeholder partnerships in order to reach out to new audiences.

15. For an initial two-year period, the agreement covers activities that bring together all levels of government, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. It provides for the development of educational, cultural and scientific contents to support dialogue and mutual appreciation, for example by revising school textbooks, producing teaching materials and disseminating the principles underpinning intercultural education, in particular on the basis of the UNESCO series of general and regional histories as well as the "roads of dialogue" programme; the strengthening of interactions among young people in order to overcome cultural barriers, for example by setting up discussion forums, in particular on the Internet, for a better decoding and appreciation of the cultural, scientific and educational content currently available; promotion of the mass media as vehicles for tolerance, for example by supporting co-production and exchange programmes for media professionals of different cultural and religious backgrounds; and establishing new multi-partnerships to help promote multilingualism, to identify and bring together students, researchers and scientists from a variety of cultural

backgrounds and also religious leaders and other influential opinion makers in order to promote mutual respect.

16. Cooperation with the Alliance of Civilizations has also been strengthened by regular exchanges between the two secretariats in relation to the Alliance's priority projects on interfaith dialogue and media literacy. In this connection, UNESCO has taken part in the non-governmental organization forum on the Alliance of Civilizations, organized in the context of the 179th session of the Executive Board; the regional seminar "Women and the Alliance of Civilizations: Opportunities and Challenges" (Buenos Aires, 28-29 April 2008); and the meeting of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations (New York, 10 June 2008).

B. Activities focused more specifically on the promotion of interreligious dialogue

17. UNESCO has always emphasized knowledge of religion as a means of understanding social and human realities. Taking into account that "beliefs" and "value systems" are intrinsic parts of each culture, understood as "ways of living together", the organization defends the view that all faiths convey a message of peace, justice and human solidarity. Thus, all religious and spiritual leaders, like other humanistic civil society movements, have the potential to exercise a moral and positive influence on how people in society understand each other and interact. Dialogue among individuals and groups belonging to different religious or spiritual traditions is therefore an increasingly significant challenge of our times.

18. The UNESCO programme on interreligious dialogue, which forms an important component of intercultural dialogue, is precisely aimed at promoting dialogue between individuals and leaders of different religions, faiths and convictions, with a view to increasing mutual knowledge about spiritual traditions and their underlying values, thus enhancing understanding among and between societies.

19. In line with its programme "Routes of dialogue", the organization has in recent years brought together, on a regular basis, eminent religious figures from the monotheistic faiths and from different spiritual and humanistic traditions, in thematic meetings, in order to analyse a shared understanding of complex issues relating to interfaith dialogue.

20. While international and regional conferences have proven worthwhile and even essential to understanding religion in many geostrategic contexts, the joint reflection entailed is of itself insufficient. The declarations, proposals and final documents adopted at meetings convened by UNESCO have highlighted the need to promote the educational and pedagogical aspects of interreligious dialogue and the necessity to develop conceptual and operational frameworks.

21. Building on the experience gained in these high-level political and intellectual encounters, the objectives set out by UNESCO for the biennium 2008-2009 are to produce and disseminate pertinent guidelines and publications to mainstream their main principles into local, national and regional policies; to raise awareness among educators and civil society representatives about the role and value of interreligious dialogue at the school level; and to elaborate and make available, nationally and regionally, databases on good practices through the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs

Network on Inter-religious Dialogue for Intercultural Understanding, which is being further strengthened.

22. In this context, particular attention is being paid to the development and implementation of joint projects and activities in the framework of the memorandum of understanding signed by UNESCO and other intergovernmental organizations such as ISESCO, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Alliance of Civilizations.

23. Programme activities include the development of teaching tools, school manuals and specific educational programmes and the design of "training of trainers" programmes in close cooperation with concerned UNESCO Chairs and the Oslo Coalition for Peace; the production of a teaching manual in Arabic and French on the cultural aspects of Christianity and Islam in view of improving mutual knowledge and respect among youth, followed by a training workshop (scheduled to be held in Beirut) for teachers of the ASPnet school on the use of the manual; the organization of a national interreligious dialogue in Mongolia to reduce religious prejudices and thus ensure harmonious coexistence of different faiths; a regional encounter (scheduled to take place in Teheran) of religious leaders to facilitate interfaith dialogue and promote peace in the region; a regional workshop in Dakar to share good practices on the role of traditional spiritualities; national workshops (scheduled in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia) with faith-based NGOs to highlight the role of women in interreligious dialogue; an expert meeting (scheduled in Brasilia) aimed at elaborating recommendations for public policies to eradicate religious prejudices and marginalization of traditional beliefs.

24. In specific multicultural environments, the need to develop rational, unprejudiced and respectful approaches to religious diversity has increased. In response to this need, multiple experiments, practices and learning spaces have been launched within culturally diverse communities throughout the world. UNESCO intends to undertake research on, and identify, such experiences through the community of practices network of UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Network on Inter-religious Dialogue for Intercultural Understanding, which ensures knowledge and information exchanges between universities and other relevant UNESCO partners. Enhanced understanding of these practices will provide the basis for the design and production of pedagogical material, awareness-raising activities and training of trainers for journalists, decision makers, teachers, etc.

25. Priority has therefore been given to teaching young people about religion and interreligious dialogue in order to make them aware of the value of respect for the other, which is more vital than ever to ensure harmonious coexistence in contemporary pluralistic societies. Such education rests on two features: on the one hand, mutual knowledge through a comparative and multidisciplinary introduction to the fundamental concepts of religions and spiritual traditions; and, on the other hand, examples of their past and present-day interactions and mutual influences, both of which will obviously vary according to the education systems of each country.

26. UNESCO has also been actively participating in the meetings of the Troika of the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace at United Nations Headquarters, and is following their discussions on the upcoming International Year

for the Rapprochement of Cultures in 2010, for which UNESCO has been designated as lead agency.

27. Finally, the misrepresentation of religion as the root cause of intercultural conflict can be further researched and understood through intercultural dialogue on issues of universal concern such as the environment, social welfare, employment, gender and poverty. Such issues already figure highly on the agendas of different spiritual and religious visions and understandings of the world. They cut across religious and other borders. Dialogue is also under way among civil society groups and NGOs with diverse religious affiliations. Activities to be developed in the longer term include building partnerships with civil society agents engaged in such dialogue, supporting meetings and seminars that bring together religious and other relevant groups, exchanges, publication and online dissemination of new approaches to religious diversity, the design of pedagogical material, awareness-raising campaigns among civil society groups and policymakers and within other relevant learning spaces.

III. Alliance of Civilizations

28. The Alliance of Civilizations was established in 2005, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey, under the auspices of the United Nations. It aims to improve understanding and cooperative relations among States and peoples across cultures and religions and, in the process, to help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism.

29. Following a report produced by 20 eminent personalities, exploring the roots of polarization between cultures and societies worldwide and proposing practical recommendations to address this growing trend, in April 2007, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, as High Representative for the Alliance. This marked the beginning of the second phase of the Alliance, with the development of an action-oriented implementation plan focusing on initiatives and projects in the areas of youth, media, education and migration.

30. As was first noted at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, the focus of the Alliance on concrete initiatives was reinforced and consolidated at the first Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, which was hosted by the Government of Spain on 15 and 16 January 2008. The Forum was a high-profile, action-oriented event that brought together a powerful network of Heads of State, political leaders, Governments, international organizations, civil society groups, religious communities, and media and corporate leaders.

Expansion of political support and Group of Friends: from 44 countries and multilaterals to 88

31. Since April 2007, the Group of Friends community has grown markedly from 44 members, when the High Representative was appointed to 88 members at present. The geographical breadth of the membership of the Group is wide and, in many cases, their engagement with the Alliance is deepening as is reflected by attendance at Group of Friends meetings, the participation in the first Forum of the Alliance in Madrid at senior levels, and invitations for Alliance participation or

requests for the granting of Alliance auspices for conferences and events organized by individual Group of Friends members.

Establishment of national strategies to advance the Alliance

32. The High Representative has urged member States of the Group of Friends to prepare national strategies for cross-cultural dialogue that cover the four main fields of the Alliance (education, media, youth and migration). Four countries — Spain, Turkey, Bulgaria and New Zealand — have already adopted their strategies to advance the objectives of the Alliance within their own borders. More are expected to follow suit in the coming year.

Partnership agreements with major agencies

33. The Alliance of Civilizations has concluded five partnership agreements with multilateral agencies and international organizations (UNESCO, the League of Arab States, ISESCO, ALECSO and United Cities and Local Governments), all of which focus on specific elements of the Alliance implementation plan. A letter of intent has been signed with the Council of Europe, confirming mutual will to prepare a bilateral memorandum of understanding to be signed in the near future. Other international organizations have also been approached in order to conclude memorandums of understanding with the Alliance.

Establishment of a network of Alliance of Civilizations Ambassadors

34. A criteria and a selection process for the appointment of Alliance of Civilizations Goodwill Ambassadors has been developed. The Ambassadors are intended to be a group of high-profile well-connected individuals who can extend the outreach, and raise the profile, of the Alliance, advocate for its objectives and projects, support fund-raising, and, upon request by the High Representative, speak on behalf of the initiative in select international forums and meetings.

Network of focal points of the Alliance

35. The High Representative called upon each member of the Group of Friends to appoint a focal point to serve as the national/principal coordinator of Alliance issues within a country or an organization and to serve as the main interlocutor to the Alliance. Twenty-four countries and nine international organizations have already appointed focal points for this purpose.

Launch of the Alliance of Civilizations online clearing house

36. In February 2008, the first theme of the Alliance of Civilizations Clearinghouse, focusing on media literacy education, was launched (see www.aocmedialiteracy.org). In addition to providing information on media literacy education programmes and policies, the website has become a virtual meeting place for media literacy education advocates and researchers and policymakers from every region of the world.

Launch of the Alliance of Civilizations rapid response media mechanism

37. In February 2008, the Alliance launched its rapid response media mechanism to support the work of media professionals by connecting them with leading experts

and analysts who can comment on intercultural issues, particularly in times of crisis. The mechanism works through outreach from the Alliance of Civilizations secretariat to leading media agencies and a web-based directory of experts and commentators (see www.globalexpertfinder.org) that is easily searchable by subject and region of expertise as well as language capacity.

38. The rapid response media mechanism was first mobilized after the release by Dutch parliamentarian Geert Wilders of a film denigrating Islam and the Koran. Actions taken included an opinion piece co-signed by Muslim religious leaders from diverse regions; the dissemination of a list of 10 experts from diverse regions prepared to provide comment and analysis on the film to media outlets around the world; and consultations with influential civil society partners to reduce potential negative fallout.

Establishment of the Youth Solidarity Fund

39. The Alliance of Civilizations has launched the Youth Solidarity Fund to support youth-led initiatives that promote long-term constructive relationships between young people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. The fund will provide seed funding in amounts of up to US$ 20,000 to outstanding youth-led projects in one or more of the following areas: intercultural and interreligious exchanges; youth leadership training; youth voices in the media.

Launch of two multimillion-dollar funds in the fields of youth employment (Silatech) and mass media for social change (Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund)

40. With an initial $100 million investment from Qatar and partnership agreements with both the World Bank and Cisco, Silatech aims to support youth enterprise and entrepreneurship, career counselling and job training, and to connect job supply with job demand, beginning with pilot programmes in the Arab world, where youth unemployment rates are among the highest in the world.

Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund

41. The Media Fund was established with an initial $10 million contribution from private business leaders and partnerships with leading Hollywood production, distribution, and talent agencies. The initial productions of the Media Fund will feature films and documentaries that address issues of cross-cultural relations. The Fund will also support research on the impact of visual media on cross-cultural relations, violence and self-perception of minority communities. Initial research has been commissioned and is under way through a joint venture of the Harvard School of Public Health and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

42. Looking ahead over the next 12 months, the Alliance looks forward to further development of existing initiatives such as the Clearinghouse, the rapid response media mechanism, the launch of the Youth Employment Initiative and new opportunities and projects. In the near term, the Alliance would like to prioritize city-to-city diplomacy efforts and encourage further development of national and regional strategies to advance the principles of the Alliance among members of the Group of Friends.

IV. United Nations Population Fund

43. UNFPA supports communities in bringing about change from within. This involves drawing on the positive cultural values and resources to promote and further reproductive rights. UNFPA collaborations and partnerships with a diverse array of civil society, including faith-based organizations, religious and tribal leaders, and indigenous peoples, have made a difference in creating local support for the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development worldwide. Activities carried out since the last session of the General Assembly and planned for the short term are presented below.

Regional forums of faith-based organizations

44. UNFPA is holding a series of regional forums focusing on enhancing partnerships and launching interfaith networks on population and development. To that end, the African regional faith-based organization forum and launch of the African interfaith network on population and development took place in Durban, South Africa, in December 2007. In attendance were 60 faith-based representatives from 18 countries. The Asian and Pacific regional faith-based organization forum and launch of Asian and Pacific interfaith network on population and development took place in Kuala Lumpur in May 2008. Sixty-eight faith-based representatives from 14 countries attended. The Arab States' regional faith-based organization forum, and subsequent launch of network will take place in July 2008, and will be followed by the Latin American and the Caribbean regional faith-based organization forum and interfaith network launch in September.

Global interfaith forum and network

45. The launching of a global interfaith network for population and development will take place at the global faith-based organization forum organized by UNFPA in Istanbul, in October 2008. That forum will be the culmination of the four previously held regional-level faith-based organization consultations, and will bring together over 200 existing and potential UNFPA partners from the faith-based world to discuss issues of population and development, and to seek ways of enhancing these partnerships in the future. The global faith-based organization forum will be the site for the launch of the global interfaith network on population and development. This network and its accompanying database of members will be another important resource for the United Nations in the development of strategic partnerships with faith-based organizations.

United Nations country team training on human rights-based and culturally sensitive approaches to programming

46. UNFPA has developed a tool known as the "culture lens", which enables the integration of its three programming approaches: gender equality, cultural sensitivity and human rights. The culture lens allows for the development of programmatic designs that fit diverse national and local contexts, without losing sight of the human rights that they are promoting. The culture lens is being used in United Nations country team culture sensitivity training, marking the first time that United Nations country teams are being trained together to link culture to development programming. To date, UNFPA has conducted United Nations country

team training for five United Nations country teams: Bangladesh, Brazil, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Jordan.

Round tables and other events on cultural integration

47. In 2008, UNFPA continues to organize a series of such round tables on the following topics: "Tackling stigma in the Arab region: working with religious and media leaders in the AIDS response"; "The role of faith-based organizations in improving maternal, newborn and child health"; "Engaging South African faith-based organizations on HIV/AIDS and violence against women"; "The Women, Faith and Development Alliance: a process and a future"; and "Interfaith education for children and youth".

48. UNFPA supported the participation of several faith-based organizations from different regions to attend a Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) strategy meeting on fostering partnerships between United Nations agencies and faith-based organizations on HIV/AIDS and co-sponsored an interfaith prayer service at the United Nations high-level meeting on AIDS.

49. Collaboration is ongoing with the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development on a joint study, assessing the relationship between religion, women's empowerment and gender equity, with a view to emerging with concrete recommendations for programming.

50. UNFPA is working on the development of socio-cultural indicators, to be used in programme design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, particularly in the UNFPA mandate areas of reproductive health, gender equality and population and development.

51. In July 2008, a United Nations inter-agency consultation on engagement with faith-based organizations was hosted by UNFPA, with the objective of sharing best practices, assessing lessons learned, and strategizing shared approaches in working with faith-based organizations in development.

52. UNFPA will launch in October a publication called *Culture Matters: Lessons from a Legacy of Engaging Faith-based Organizations*, documenting the various areas of partnership and collaboration with religious leaders and faith-based development agencies around the world, the lessons learned and the policy recommendations.

53. Collaboration is ensured with UNICEF to establish a trust fund for the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting. The initiative aims to reduce the practice by 40 per cent in 17 countries by 2015, by using culturally sensitive approaches. The project has already been launched in the following eight countries: Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Senegal and the Sudan.

Reproductive rights and population welfare of indigenous peoples

54. UNFPA works in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Peru provide support, while initiating work on indigenous issues in countries such as Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. In the area of population, UNFPA supports the development of a national statistics commission for indigenous peoples in Ecuador, and the generation, analysis, use and dissemination of disaggregated data on indigenous peoples in some of these countries' efforts to

integrate indigenous information in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses.

55. UNFPA continues to support Governments and civil society on the development and implementation of intercultural reproductive health models, programmes and strategies in countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mexico, Panama and Viet Nam, among others, supporting joint community-based and government initiatives for building capacities to improve access to culturally sensitive, high quality reproductive health services, addressing the high maternal mortality indicators and equity gaps that prevail among indigenous women in all geographic regions.

56. Support is also provided to programmes that address the dissemination of information on HIV/AIDS, and the prevention of harmful practices among indigenous peoples for which research and evidence-based studies are being carried out. In Bolivia, Guatemala and Panama, UNFPA provides technical assistance to indigenous communities and networks for strengthening access to sexual and reproductive health services.

V. Department of Public Information

57. The Department of Public Information continued to promote and raise global awareness of issues relating to interreligious and intercultural dialogue through its regular coverage of meetings of relevant United Nations bodies, its reporting on the activities of the Organization across the full range of its news and other information outputs, and its support for correspondents wishing to report on United Nations events and intergovernmental conferences.

58. A wide range of developments and issues related to the promotion of a culture of peace, tolerance and interreligious and intercultural dialogue received prominent coverage on the United Nations News Centre portal, one of the most heavily visited segments of the United Nations website. Since the adoption of resolution 62/90, some 40 news articles covering those issues were produced by the associated United Nations News Service and distributed to over 50,000 subscribers to its e-mail news alerts service (English and French). Many of those stories were also published on a variety of United Nations system and external websites, among them media outlets, news aggregator websites, NGOs and educational institutions.

59. During the period under review, United Nations Radio produced a number of news stories, features and analytical backgrounders on related events at the United Nations. It also focused on language stories, including a story on using languages to open the window on Eastern and Western cultural exchanges and stories on respecting linguistic diversity. United Nations Television produced a magazine story for *21st Century* on ending Muslim-Christian sectarian violence in Poso, Sulawesi (Indonesia). The segment aired on BBC World and some 50 other channels in early 2008, and was also distributed as a shorter news feature for *United Nations in Action* and *CNN World Report*.

International Day of Non-Violence (2 October 2007)

60. The Department has promoted the first International Day of Non-Violence to the public and media through various information materials. A background press

release in all official languages and a media advisory were produced and disseminated to media at United Nations Headquarters and in the field through the Department of Public Information network of United Nations Information Centres (UNICs). Background information on the principle of non-violence was included on a website created for the Day, together with messages of the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly.

61. These information materials and the message of the Secretary-General for the Day were translated into local languages and circulated to national media by several UNICs, including in Ankara, Asunción, Teheran and Warsaw, and the United Nations Office in Baku. The United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels translated the message of the Secretary-General for the Day into Greek and Portuguese for distribution as a press release, and shared the Portuguese version with UNIC Rio de Janeiro, UNDP offices in Brazil, and United Nations missions in Guinea-Bissau and Timor-Leste.

62. Interviews with national television and radio broadcasters were given on the Day by representatives from UNICs Cairo, Colombo and New Delhi. The Director of UNIC Cairo also gave a number of interviews to print media following a joint celebration of the Day organized with the Embassy of India. A feature article written by a UNIC Dhaka official was published in a Bangladeshi daily newspaper. UNIC Khartoum organized a briefing for journalists on the occasion of the Day.

63. UNICs also worked to promote the Day through special events. UNIC New Delhi participated in a nationally televised multi-faith prayer meeting at which the UNIC Director delivered the message of the Secretary-General for the Day. Representatives of the United Nations Information Service in Vienna attended a ceremony of lights in the city centre to mark the Day and distributed the message of the Secretary-General at the event; UNIC Prague held a press conference, a student conference and a street awareness-raising campaign on the Day; UNIC Dhaka delivered a lecture at a seminar on non-violence at Dhaka University; UNIC Asunción organized an information stand at an exhibition on non-violence; UNIC La Paz held a ceremony to mark the Day in partnership with a national non-violence organization; and a representative from UNIC Kathmandu delivered the message of the Secretary-General at an event organized by the Embassy of India.

Educational outreach

64. As in previous years, the Department of Public Information will organize in 2008 a student conference to mark the International Day of Peace. This event has been successful in raising awareness about the importance of peace and developing a culture of peace among youth worldwide. More than 500 students will be invited to United Nations Headquarters to interact with United Nations Messengers of Peace and students in peacekeeping missions via videoconference to discuss how peace and a culture of peace, or the lack thereof, impact their lives. The event will be webcast, and young people everywhere will be able to send messages of peace to the United Nations Cyberschoolbus website, which devotes part of its website to promoting peace and a culture of peace.

65. Last year, the Department of Public Information organized a three-day symposium in cooperation with the Peace Education Centre, Teachers College (Columbia University), as part of the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Institute on Peace Education. This special event drew several

hundred peace educators from around the world and presented an opportunity for the United Nations to share and introduce peace education to the broader international community, including United Nations personnel and affiliated NGOs. Opening remarks were made by the Deputy Secretary-General.

The Holocaust and the United Nations outreach programme

66. General Assembly resolution 60/7 designated 27 January as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and requested the Secretary-General to establish a programme of outreach to mobilize civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education, and to help prevent future acts of genocide. A multifaceted outreach programme has been developed, including seminars, discussion papers drafted by distinguished scholars, briefings, film screenings and innovative online information products for educators.

Unlearning intolerance seminar series

67. These seminars aim to examine manifestations of intolerance and explore means to promote respect and understanding among peoples. As its name suggests, the "Unlearning Intolerance" series offers opportunities to discuss how intolerance, wherever it exists and for whatever reason, can be "unlearned" through education, inclusion and example. Recent seminars have included those on the themes "Critical perspectives in combating genocide", "Cartooning for peace" and "Art changing attitudes towards the environment".

Outreach programme on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade

68. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/122, the Department has developed a diverse multi-platform strategy comprising a series of events beginning with the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, follow-up activities throughout the year and, building on the slave trade project developed by UNESCO, an educational programme for intermediate and high schools that can be used at any time during the school year.

VI. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

69. By its resolution 62/154, the General Assembly affirmed that the Human Rights Council shall promote universal respect for all religious and cultural values and address instances of intolerance, discrimination and incitement of hatred against members of any community or adherents of any religion. By the same resolution, the Assembly took note of the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote and include human rights aspects in educational programmes, particularly the World Programme for Human Rights Education proclaimed by the General Assembly on 10 December 2004. The Assembly called upon the High Commissioner to, inter alia, continue those efforts, focusing on the contributions of cultures, as well as religious and cultural diversity, and to collaborate with other relevant international organizations in holding joint conferences designed to encourage the dialogue among civilizations and promote understanding of the universality of human rights and their implementation at various levels.

70. Information on the activities undertaken by the High Commissioner related to the prevention of defamation of religions, intolerance and discrimination on the basis of religion is contained in the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to its resolution 62/154.

VII. Department of Economic and Social Affairs

71. The contribution of the Department to intercultural and interreligious dialogue operates at two levels: the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination and the secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues of the Division for Social Policy and Development.

A. Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination

72. In its resolution 62/90, the General Assembly welcomed the designation of the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to play the focal point role in the Secretariat on interreligious and intercultural matters, as mentioned in the relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/62/337, para. 27) and in accordance with resolution 61/221. The Office is mandated to interact with United Nations system entities and to coordinate their contribution to the intergovernmental process.

73. The Office has carried out these functions to prepare for the consideration of the General Assembly agenda item devoted to culture of peace and has liaised with all actors concerned to prepare the documentation for the item. It has also provided information on the matter to a wide range of governmental and non-governmental actors who have turned to the Office in its capacity as focal point in the Secretariat.

74. The Office was represented at a consultation hosted by the World Council of Churches and the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations, held at Geneva in January 2008, on a proposed United Nations Decade of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace. It also took part in several meetings of the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, including as a speaker on the status of United Nations consideration of this topic, and at inter-agency consultations convened by UNFPA on the work of the United Nations with faith-based organizations.

75. The Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination has carried out these additional functions within the existing budgetary provisions. As no additional resources, particularly human resources, were allocated to carry out the mandate, its activities have necessarily been focused on the tasks foreseen in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 62/90, namely interacting with United Nations system entities and coordinating their contribution to the intergovernmental process.

B. Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

76. The secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues contributes to the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue through

servicing the annual sessions of the Forum and other relevant events and work carried out during the year. Indigenous issues are therefore the main substantive area through which the Department of Economic and Social Affairs contributes to intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

77. It is estimated that there are more than 370 million indigenous peoples around the world who speak over 4,000 languages (800 in Papua New Guinea, for example). Indigenous peoples are known for their linguistic and other cultural and biological diversity and knowledge of their environment, such as their knowledge of biodiversity, medical and pharmaceutical knowledge, agricultural farming systems and herding of animals, e.g. cattle, reindeer and llamas. Indigenous peoples continue to contribute to the world's cultural diversity and creativity through their visual and performing arts. Development, environment, health, education, culture and human rights are the six mandated areas of the Forum, according to Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/22. The pronouncements and recommendations of the Forum on culture permeate its work as a whole. Some of the work that the Forum undertakes or contributes to and that constitutes a contribution to the intercultural dialogue is presented below.

Promotion of the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

78. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007; at least 17 of its 46 articles pertain to culture and contribute to intercultural dialogue. The Declaration is the most comprehensive statement on the human rights of indigenous peoples, at the individual and collective level, and article 42 explicitly mentions the Permanent Forum as a body that "shall promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration".

Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

79. The General Assembly, by its resolution 59/174, proclaimed the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, and, by its resolution 60/142, adopted the Programme of Action for the Decade. The goal of the Decade is the further strengthening of international cooperation for the resolution of problems faced by indigenous people by means of action-oriented programmes and specific projects, increased technical assistance and relevant standard-setting activities. Of the five main objectives of the Decade, all of which contribute to intercultural dialogue, it is worth mentioning two that are particularly relevant to this specific topic: the second objective, "promoting full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in decisions which directly or indirectly affect their lifestyles, traditional lands and territories, their cultural integrity as indigenous peoples with collective rights or any other aspect of their lives, considering the principle of free, prior and informed consent", and the third objective, "redefining development policies that depart from a vision of equity and that are culturally appropriate, including respect for cultural and linguistic diversity of indigenous peoples".

International Day of the World's Indigenous People

80. In 1994, the General Assembly, by its resolution 49/214, decided that the International Day of the World's Indigenous People would be observed on 9 August

every year during the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (49/214). The date marks the day of the first meeting, in 1982, of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the Commission on Human Rights. Every year the day is observed at United Nations Headquarters with messages from the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Chairperson of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Panel and cultural events are organized and are open to the public.

Promotion of cultural perspectives on development

81. Data collection and disaggregation concerning indigenous peoples have been identified by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues as posing unique challenges both in terms of developing data for global comparative purposes and of developing data that is useful at a micro-level for indigenous peoples. In analysing data, the full diversity and demographic profile of indigenous communities should be taken into account, including gender, children, youth and older persons, and people with disabilities. The process of data collection is critical for the empowerment of the communities and for identifying their needs. Indigenous communities should have the right to have data (primary and aggregated) returned to them, for their own use, noting the importance of the confidentiality of such data, particularly as it applies to individuals who have participated in conducting data-collection exercises. The Forum has also been promoting indicators of well-being, poverty and sustainability that respond to the cultural specificities of indigenous peoples.

Methodologies regarding free, prior and informed consent and indigenous peoples

82. The implementation of the principle of free, prior and informed consent has been identified as a major challenge by the Forum. The Forum held a workshop on the topic in 2005, examined the international and domestic instruments and practices relevant to the principle, identified challenges, clarified the content and elements of the principle and made a number of policy recommendations. The implementation of the principle of free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples, which is enshrined in various articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, will contribute to the voices of indigenous peoples being heard within the multicultural societies in which they live.

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues special theme for 2010: indigenous peoples' development with culture and identity

83. At its seventh session, the Forum decided that the theme of its ninth session in 2010 would be "Indigenous peoples' development with culture and identity: articles 3 and 23 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples".

Focus of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on indigenous languages during the International Year of Languages (2008)

84. In 2008 the Forum held a workshop on the subject and a half-day discussion during its seventh session. Among the main actions recommended were the

following: (a) working towards concrete actions and legislative development aimed at eliminating discrimination against the current use of indigenous languages; (b) developing programmes aimed at promoting the empowerment of indigenous languages through all mediums, including radio and television; (c) supporting and increasing the number of centres for the study of indigenous languages; (d) financing and supporting schemes for special projects that are formulated by indigenous peoples and are focused on revitalization and rescue of threatened languages; (e) designing, in consultation with indigenous peoples and the Forum, the organization of a world conference on linguistic diversity, indigenous languages, identity and education, as a contribution to the programme of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

United Nations Development Group guidelines on indigenous peoples' issues

85. Responding to the objectives of the Programme of Action of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and of the Forum, the United Nations Development Group developed and adopted guidelines on indigenous peoples' issues for the operational activities of the organization at the country level. The guidelines should contribute to the integration of culturally sensitive approaches in the area of development.

VIII. Overview of other regional and international activities on intercultural and interreligious dialogue

86. This section presents important regional and international initiatives aimed at promoting and deepening intercultural and interreligious dialogue. It is not an exhaustive list of such initiatives, and many other interesting activities certainly deserve to be mentioned. However, given the space limitations of a report of this kind, the list is restricted to major initiatives, other than those presented in previous sections of this report, that were undertaken during the period under review, are planned in the near future and were mentioned by Member States during the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Cooperation and Understanding for Peace, held by the General Assembly in October 2007.

87. At United Nations Headquarters, the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace has continued to carry out important work. Initiated by the Philippines, the Tripartite Forum is an open-ended consultative partnership among Governments, the United Nations system and civil society that explores practical measures, utilizing interfaith dialogue and cooperation, to promote respect and advance understanding. Involvement in the Tripartite Forum has continued to grow, with 15 United Nations agencies, 53 Governments, and 110 United Nations-accredited faith-based NGOs collaborating with it on development and peace goals. The Tripartite Forum holds regular meetings and invites United Nations and outside experts to present their activities and views.

88. Australia and the European Union hosted a regional youth interfaith forum in Perth, Australia, in December 2007, for youth from 12 countries.

89. The European Parliament and the European Council proclaimed 2008 the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue; a wide range of events has been organized by the European Commission, the Member States, the civil society and the media.

90. The fourth Asia-Pacific Dialogue on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace and Harmony was held in Phnom Penh, from 3 to 6 April 2008, gathering together 16 countries of the region.

91. In May 2008, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the Council of Europe launched the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, which provides various orientations for the promotion of intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding; a European conference on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue took place in San Marino, on 23 and 24 April.

92. The fourth Asia-Europe Meeting Interfaith Dialogue was co-organized by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and Thailand and hosted by the city of Amsterdam from 3 to 5 June 2008, with the overall theme "Interfaith dialogue in practice: sharing best practices".

93. The World Conference on Dialogue was held in Madrid in July 2008. The Conference, which was the personal initiative of the King of Saudi Arabia, was opened by the King of Saudi Arabia and the King of Spain. The main thrust of the discussions was on the need to promote understanding and tolerance among followers of the world's faiths, and on the dual needs to combat terrorism and propaganda on the "clash of civilizations". More than 200 clerics, academics and experts representing diverse creeds and belief systems from around the world took part in the Conference. Appropriate modalities for a follow-up to the Conference are being finalized.

94. Kazakhstan will conduct an international forum of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Western and Islamic countries, entitled "Common world: progress through diversity", on 17 October 2008, in Astana, and will host in September 2009 the Third Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

95. The Parliament of the World's Religions, which brings together leaders and followers of the world's religious and spiritual communities to discuss peace, diversity and sustainability in the context of interreligious understanding and cooperation, will be held in Melbourne, Australia, in December 2009.

96. The Philippines will host the Non-Aligned Movement special ministerial meeting on interfaith dialogue and cooperation for peace in Manila, in May 2009.

97. Consideration is currently under way in the Russian Federation regarding the establishment of a religious leaders' forum, the main focus of which would be aimed at minimizing the gaps and controversies that exist in the personal and fundamental views of different religions and denominations.

IX. Conclusion

98. **The report reveals the multiplicity of initiatives taken at the international level to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue, all of which contribute to the implementation of resolution 62/90. Given the growing number of actors involved in this area of work and the difficulty to reflect in a comprehensive and appropriate manner on new initiatives, the Assembly may wish to focus its future request for reporting on the preparations of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010) by the United Nations system and other major international actors.**

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Item 67 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

The right to health

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the interim report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Paul Hunt, submitted in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 6/29.

* A/63/150 and Corr.1.

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Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

Summary

The present report, submitted in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 6/29, contains two main sections: as accountability is one of the central features of human rights, section I discusses the importance of effective, transparent, accessible and independent accountability mechanisms in relation to the right to the highest attainable standard of health. Section II and the annex to the present report, containing the Human Rights Guidelines for Pharmaceutical Companies in relation to Access to Medicines, which set out the human rights responsibilities of pharmaceutical companies in that context. Each theme is accompanied by a Commentary. The product of wide-ranging discussions spanning five years, the Guidelines consider issues such as transparency, management, accountability, patents, licensing and pricing.

Since this is the last thematic report of Mr. Hunt, it concludes with some brief observations arising from his tenure between 2002 and 2008.

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I. Introduction

1. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health ("the right to the highest attainable standard of health" or "the right to health") was established pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolutions 2002/31 and 2004/27. By its resolution 6/29 of 14 December 2007, the Human Rights Council extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for a further period of three years. The present report is submitted in accordance with that resolution.

II. Activities of the mandate

2. In accordance with his mandate, the Special Rapporteur has been considering the policies and practices of pharmaceutical companies in relation to the right to the highest attainable standard of health, including access to medicines. In that context, the Special Rapporteur was invited to undertake a visit to a pharmaceutical company, GlaxoSmithKline on 2 and 3 June 2008. The main objective of the mission was to review the policies of that company and learn about good practices, as well as obstacles encountered by the company in relation to the right to the highest attainable standard of heath. The report will be submitted to the Human Rights Council in 2009.

3. On 5 June 2008, the Human Rights Council devoted a full day's meeting to the human rights of women. The purpose of the meeting was to give an overview of the work of other United Nations bodies and agencies regarding the human rights of women. The Special Rapporteur participated in the panel on maternal mortality that was designed to raise awareness of maternal mortality as a human rights issue. Participants discussed a wide range of issues, including sexual and reproductive health rights; the importance of education and awareness-raising on sexual and reproductive health issues; access to contraception, emergency obstetric care and other health services; the relationship between maternal mortality and unsafe abortion; the importance of increasing donor support for maternal health; and the critical importance of monitoring and accountability, such as maternal death audits or reviews.

4. Between January and July 2008, the Special Rapporteur participated in a number of meetings convened by international organizations, Governments, civil society and others. In February, he spoke at a conference, organized by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, on health and human rights. Also in February, he spoke to the staff of the leading medical journal, *The Lancet*. In March, he travelled to Washington, D.C., and made a presentation to the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) on "Looking at the PAHO Strategic Plan 2008-2012 from a human rights perspective". While in Washington, he was invited to the 131st regular session of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to participate in a right-to-health discussion with the Commissioners and other specialists. In March, the Special Rapporteur delivered a paper, on health and human rights impact assessments, as part of a seminar series organized by London Metropolitan University. During the same month he also delivered a keynote address at an African HIV/AIDS Conference in London. In April he made a presentation on palliative care and human rights to the Help the Hospices International Palliative Care Reference Group. In April, he spoke on the right to the highest attainable standard of health at

a London seminar organized by the Society of Legal Scholars. At the end of April, he travelled to New York, where he had a series of meetings. He met with Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative to discuss the draft "Human Rights Guidelines for Pharmaceutical Companies in relation to Access to Medicines", as well as the work of the GAVI Alliance. While in New York, the Special Rapporteur spoke at a meeting organized by the People's Health Movement (United States of America). In May 2008, he delivered the opening address in Barcelona at the 19th International Conference on the Reduction of Drug Related Harm, organized by the International Harm Reduction Association. The Association has now published his presentation which is entitled "Human rights, health and harm reduction: States' amnesia and parallel universes" (see www.ihra.net). The Special Rapporteur also delivered a keynote address at the 2nd Conference on Migrant Health in Europe, held in Malmo, Sweden, on 23 and 24 May 2008

5. Reports relating to the Special Rapporteur's missions to Ecuador/Colombia and India, and as well as GlaxoSmithKline will be submitted to the Human Rights Council in 2009.

6. In the reporting period, the Special Rapporteur sent a number of urgent appeals and other communications to various Governments. The communications will be reflected in the communications report that will be submitted to the Human Rights Council in 2009.

7. All United Nations documents related to the work of the Special Rapporteur, including press statements and reports to the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights/Human Rights Council, are available on the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (www.ohchr.org). For ease of reference, all the Special Rapporteur's official reports and press statements, as well as selected conference papers, presentations and interviews, can be found on the website of the Human Rights Centre, University of Essex (www2.essex.ac.uk/human_rights_centre/rth.shtm).

III. Accountability

8. Accountability is one of the central features of human rights. Without accountability, human rights can become no more than window-dressing. Whether human rights are applied to development, poverty reduction, trade, health systems, neglected diseases, maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS or anything else, they require that accessible, transparent and effective mechanisms of accountability be established.

9. Accountability provides individuals and communities with an opportunity to understand how those with human rights responsibilities have discharged their duties. Equally, it provides those with human rights responsibilities the opportunity to explain what they have done and why. Where mistakes have been made, accountability requires redress. But accountability is not a matter of blame and punishment. Sometimes called constructive accountability, it is a process that helps to identify what works, so that it can be repeated, and what does not, so that it can be revised. It is a way of checking that reasonable balances are fairly struck.

10. Although human rights demand accountability, that does not mean that everybody working in health and human rights — all health professionals, all specialized agencies — have the task of holding duty-bearers to account. The health

and human rights movement needs human rights advisers, implementers and enablers, as well as those whose job it is to hold duty-bearers to account. All those functions will rarely reside in one organization or individual. For example, while specialized agencies should be human rights advisers, implementers and enablers, it is not their primary task to hold States to account. The accountability function must be provided by some organization or person, but probably not by a specialized agency, unless the agency decides to establish a discreet independent procedure and body for this purpose.[1]

11. In the context of the right to the highest attainable standard of health, there are many different types of accountability mechanisms, including national human rights institutions, health commissioners, democratically elected local health councils, public hearings, patients' committees, impact assessments, judicial proceedings, and others. An institution as complex and important as a health system — and a human right as complex and extensive as the right to the highest attainable standard of health — require a range of effective, transparent, accessible, independent accountability mechanisms. The media and civil society organizations have a crucial role to play.

12. Accountability in respect of health systems is often extremely weak. Sometimes the same body that provides health services also deals with regulating and holding to account. In some cases, accountability is little more than a device to check that health funds were spent as they should have been. Of course, that is important. But human rights accountability is much broader. It is also concerned with ensuring that health systems are improving, and the right to the highest attainable standard of health is being progressively realized, for all, including disadvantaged individuals, communities and populations.

13. In some States, the private health sector, while playing a very important role, is largely unregulated. Crucially, the requirement of human rights accountability extends to both the public and private health sectors. Additionally, it is not confined to national bodies; it also extends to international actors working on health-related issues. Accountability mechanisms are urgently needed for all those — public, private, national and international — working on health-related issues.

14. The design of appropriate, independent accountability mechanisms demands creativity and imagination. Often associated with accountability, lawyers must be willing to understand the distinctive characteristics and challenges of the right to the highest attainable standard of health, and learn from the rich experience of medicine and public health.

15. Since 2002, the Special Rapporteur has emphasized the critical importance of accountability in relation to the right to the highest attainable standard of health. Building on the work of others, he has developed an analytical framework for "unpacking" the right to health and making this fundamental human right easier to grasp. This analytical framework is used in most of his reports. Crucially, monitoring and accountability are an integral part of this framework.[2]

16. Judicial accountability is one form of accountability. While this form of accountability is considered in many of the Special Rapporteur's reports, the most

[1] As the International Labour Organization has chosen to do.

[2] One of the fullest elaborations of the analytical framework is in the report on people with mental disabilities (E/CN.4/2005/51); on monitoring and accountability, see paras. 67-75.

detailed discussion is in A/HRC/4/28 (section III). There are also administrative forms of accountability, such as health impact assessments, explored in A/62/214 (section III). The Special Rapporteur's reports on the skills drain (A/60/348, paras. 66-72 and 86-88), the Millennium Development Goals (A/59/422, paras. 36-41), and health systems (A/HRC/7/11 and Corr.1, paras. 65 and 99-106) have also addressed accountability. Further, the Special Rapporteur's country reports have frequently addressed accountability mechanisms, for example, in relation to Uganda (E/CN.4/2006/48/Add.2, paras. 86-93), Romania (E/CN.4/2005/51/Add.4, paras. 26-27) and Sweden (A/HRC/4/28/Add.2, paras. 31-33 and 122-123). The Human Rights Guidelines for Pharmaceutical Companies in Relation to Access to Medicines (see annex to the present report) also look at the critical issue of accountability of pharmaceutical companies.

17. On the whole, however, the human rights literature devotes surprisingly little attention to accountability — and there is even less written about accountability and the right to the highest attainable standard of health. Thus, a recent study by Helen Potts, *Accountability and the Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health*[3] (see www2.essex.ac.uk/human_rights_centre/rth) is very timely. This practical study introduces the right to the highest attainable standard of health; describes the process of accountability (which includes monitoring, holding to account, and redress); provides examples of various accountability mechanisms that are available at the national, regional and international levels; describes the types of remedies that should be available to rights-holders; provides examples of accountability in action; and provides a list of key factors required for accountability in the context of the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

18. The study is a valuable information resource for all those committed to health and human rights, including policymakers and advocates. It will help Governments to fulfil their right-to-health obligations and assist those seeking to hold Governments to account. The Special Rapporteur hopes that this useful study will generate more research and publications, as well as a deeper appreciation of the crucial role of accountability and the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

IV. The human rights responsibilities of pharmaceutical companies in relation to access to medicines

19. States have primary responsibility for enhancing access to medicines. Between 2002 and 2008, the Special Rapporteur regularly scrutinized States' duties in relation to access to medicines. These duties are the main focus of chapter III.A of his report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session (A/61/338). They are also a key theme recurring throughout several of his country missions and reports, such as those regarding Peru (E/CN.4/2005/51/Add.3) and Uganda (E/CN.4/2006/48/Add.2). Another report looks at States' duties in relation to access to medicines and the World Trade Organization (E/CN.4/2004/49/Add.1). Some of his press statements have focused on States' duties in relation to access to medicines, for example, the press remarks of 5 July 2004 and 13 July 2005. In

[3] University of Essex, 2008, funded by the Open Society Institute.

addition, some of his other publications have examined States' duties in relation to access to medicines, such as "Neglected diseases: A human rights analysis".[4]

20. Moreover, the Special Rapporteur has frequently discussed access to medicines with States, including the adverse impact of import tariffs on access, the enormous problem of failing and collapsing health systems, counterfeiting, diversion, and so on. He has provided States with numerous recommendations regarding access to medicines and he has also commented when, in his view, States have failed to do all they reasonably can to enhance access to this vital component of the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

21. In short, States have been the central focus of his attention in relation to access to medicines.

22. On numerous occasions over the last six years, Ministers, senior public officials and others have informed the Special Rapporteur that, when endeavouring to implement the right to the highest attainable standard of health, States encounter many obstacles. Among the obstacles they have mentioned, two stand out. First, the policies and practices of donor countries; for this reason, the Special Rapporteur has looked, on numerous occasions in several reports, at the role of donors, most recently in his report on his mission to Sweden, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (A/HRC/7/11/Add.2).

23. Secondly, Ministers, senior public officials and others have argued that the policies and practices of some pharmaceutical companies constitute obstacles to States' implementation of the right to the highest attainable standard of health and, in particular, their endeavours to enhance access to medicines. They have mentioned, for example, excessively high prices, inadequate attention to research and development concerning diseases that disproportionately impact people in developing countries, inappropriate drug promotion, and problematic clinical trials. Ministers and senior public officials have also acknowledged, however, that the pharmaceutical sector has an indispensable role to play in relation to the right to health and access to medicines. Moreover, they have recognized the constructive contribution of specific pharmaceutical companies.

24. The Special Rapporteur's mandate expressly requires him to identify, inter alia, obstacles to the implementation of the right to the highest attainable standard of health. He is also expressly mandated to report on good practices, and to make recommendations that will help to promote and protect the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

25. Between 2003 and 2006, the Special Rapporteur engaged in many discussions on access to medicines with numerous parties, including pharmaceutical companies. These substantive discussions took place at symposiums and workshops, as well as informal visits to pharmaceutical companies. They were informed by the work of States, pharmaceutical companies (and their associations, such as the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations), the United Nations Global Compact, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the World Health Organization and other elements of the United Nations system, the Business Leaders Initiative on Human Rights, numerous civil society organizations, and

[4] Paul Hunt et al., *Neglected diseases: A human rights analysis*, World Health Organization Special Programme for Research and Training, Special Topics No.6, 2007.

others. More recently, the Special Rapporteur has benefited from the reports of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises.

26. During these numerous discussions, the human rights duties of States in relation to access to medicines were reasonably clear, and these duties are now explored, in considerable detail, in the Special Rapporteur's various reports (see A/61/338). However, it became apparent during these discussions that the nature and scope of pharmaceutical companies' human rights responsibilities in relation to access to medicines were not clear. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, for example, confirms that the private business sector has responsibilities regarding the realization of the right to the highest attainable standard of health, but it has not taken further steps to specify these responsibilities.[5] While the Committee's general statement of principle is very important, it provides no practical guidance about the human rights responsibilities of pharmaceutical companies in relation to access to medicines.

27. It became imperative, therefore, to address this situation. How can pharmaceutical companies sensibly be asked to respect their human rights responsibilities in relation to access to medicines without much more specific guidance, as well as the identification of good practices? How can they be monitored, and held to account, if their human rights responsibilities in relation to access to medicines are unclear?

28. In an effort to shape a collaborative approach aimed at addressing these questions, a series of substantive meetings with a number of major pharmaceutical companies, and civil society groups, was organized by the Special Rapporteur and Mary Robinson, President of Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative and former High Commissioner for Human Rights. The result of these discussions was a two-phase proposal suggesting a way forward. This proposal was discussed at length with the companies involved and revised to accommodate a number of their concerns.

29. First, it was suggested that a small group of human rights experts and representatives from pharmaceutical companies work together to identify as much common ground as possible, as well as good faith disagreements, in relation to pharmaceutical companies' human rights responsibilities and access to medicines. It was proposed that this process would take two years and would generate an important, useful report that clarified what can properly be asked of pharmaceutical companies in relation to access to medicines and human rights.

30. The second part of the proposal outlined a process through which a small group of experts would then be appointed, by consensus among those participating in the initiative, to use this report to evaluate the policies and practices of certain pharmaceutical companies. These evaluations would be made public. This second phase would last for an initial period of three years.

31. The hallmark of this two-phase, five-year proposal was constructive cooperation and collaboration with a number of major pharmaceutical companies.

32. To their credit, two companies, Novartis and NovoNordisk, were willing to proceed with the proposal. Unfortunately, however, the majority of companies

[5] See E/C.12/2000/4, general comment 14, para. 42.

involved in the initiative were unwilling to proceed. Reluctantly, the Special Rapporteur and Mrs. Robinson decided that buy-in from only two companies was insufficient for what was designed to be a collaborative initiative engaging a range of major pharmaceutical companies. It was agreed that there was no choice, unfortunately, other than to put the proposal aside.

33. The regrettable refusal of some pharmaceutical companies to engage in this collaborative project did not diminish the need to pursue the central objective. Given that some States allege that the practices of some pharmaceutical companies are obstacles to access to medicines, the urgent need remained for greater clarity regarding the human rights responsibilities of pharmaceutical companies in relation to access to medicines.

34. Of course, the long-term goal is the development of internationally recognized human rights guidelines for both States and pharmaceutical companies in relation to access to medicines. However, there is greater clarity about the human rights responsibilities of States than there is about the responsibilities of pharmaceutical companies regarding access to medicines. As already observed, several reports of the Special Rapporteur explore the responsibilities of States regarding access to medicines. Indeed, one report applies the right-to-health analytical framework and sets out in detail the numerous human rights responsibilities of States in relation to access to medicines (A/61/338). There is no comparable human rights guidance for pharmaceutical companies in relation to access to medicines. In these circumstances, the Special Rapporteur's priority focus was on human rights guidelines for pharmaceutical companies in relation to access to medicines.

35. Thus, as signalled in his report to the General Assembly (ibid.), the Special Rapporteur embarked on a process of preparing, for consultation, draft human rights guidelines for pharmaceutical companies in relation to access to medicines. That process drew heavily upon the extensive discussions with pharmaceutical companies and others that had taken place between 2003 and 2006. There were additional consultations, too. In 2007, for example, the University of Toronto organized a multi-stakeholder workshop, attended by pharmaceutical companies.

36. That process led to the publication of draft guidelines in September 2007. The draft was available for public comment until 31 December 2007; to allow as much consultation as possible, the deadline was postponed until 31 March and again until 15 May 2008. To facilitate consultation, the draft was placed on the websites of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the Human Rights Centre, University of Essex. The Special Rapporteur noticed that the draft was also posted on numerous other websites, too.

37. Since September 2007, the Special Rapporteur actively sought comments on the draft. In October, the Government of Brazil held an open consultation, attended by States, at United Nations Headquarters in New York. There were two consultations with a number of major institutional investors in New York and in London. The draft was discussed with the World Health Organization and, on two occasions, with the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations. Other non-governmental organizations were also consulted.

38. Unfortunately, when the Special Rapporteur approached some pharmaceutical companies to meet and discuss the draft, all declined, with the exception of NovoNordisk. Although the Special Rapporteur's mission in June 2008 to

GlaxoSmithKline (see para. 2 above) did not specifically examine the draft Guidelines, the mission provided an excellent occasion to reflect very closely on the issues, and the Special Rapporteur is most grateful for that opportunity. A few companies sent helpful written comments on the draft. Some 40 stakeholders sent written comments, all of which were placed on the web, with a small handful of exceptions where confidentiality was requested.

39. In summary, extensive written and oral comments on the draft were received from a very wide range of stakeholders encompassing States, institutional investors, pharmaceutical companies, specialized agencies, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations, academics, and others. The Special Rapporteur takes this opportunity to warmly thank all of those who provided their invaluable comments, advice and information. A special thank you is due to Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative. The Special Rapporteur, however, has sole responsibility for the draft and final version of the Guidelines.

40. When the Special Rapporteur informed the General Assembly in October 2006 that he intended to prepare draft guidelines, he was encouraged to proceed with this challenging project. He updated the Human Rights Council in March 2007 and the General Assembly in October 2007. When reporting to the Human Rights Council in March 2008, he confirmed his intention to finalize the text before the end of July 2008.

The Guidelines

41. The draft Guidelines were extensively revised in the light of the very numerous written and oral comments. The final version of the Guidelines is contained in the annex to the present report. Beginning with a preamble, the Guidelines are grouped by themes, such as transparency, management, monitoring and accountability, pricing and ethical marketing. Each theme is followed by a brief commentary.

42. The Guidelines should be read with the Special Rapporteur's report to the General Assembly on access to medicines (A/61/338). That report includes a section on the responsibilities of States and another on the responsibilities of pharmaceutical companies. The discussion and analysis will not be repeated here. Instead, some interrelated points are briefly emphasized.

Health systems

43. At the heart of the right to the highest attainable standard of health lies an effective and integrated health system, encompassing medical care and the underlying determinants of health, which is responsive to national and local priorities, and accessible to all. Medical care and access to medicines are vital elements of an effective, integrated, responsive and accessible health system. Their full realization crucially depends upon such a system being in place. In many countries, however, health systems are failing and collapsing (see A/HRC/7/11). There are, in many countries, extremely grave systemic obstacles to enhancing access to medicines, such as clinics without health workers and the most basic facilities. While immediate steps can be taken by a range of actors to enhance access to medicines, it is imperative that systemic obstacles are recognized and tackled as a matter of priority and urgency.

A shared responsibility

44. States have primary responsibility for ensuring both the right to the highest attainable standard of health and enhancing access to medicines. However, it is a shared responsibility. If access to medicines is to be enhanced, numerous national and international actors have an indispensable role to play. The Millennium Development Goals recognize that pharmaceutical companies are among those sharing this responsibility. Goal 8, a global partnership for development, has a number of targets, not least: "In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries".

Enhancing shareholder value

45. Pharmaceutical companies operate in complex market and social settings that give rise to a range of responsibilities to various stakeholders. Of course, companies have a responsibility to enhance shareholder value. This responsibility has to be seen in the context of other social, developmental and human rights responsibilities, especially the pharmaceutical sector's central societal mission to develop high-quality medicines that are accessible to those in need. Moreover, all pharmaceutical companies would find it beneficial to adopt a rights-sensitive approach to their businesses, as outlined in the excellent joint publication of the United Nations Global Compact, Business Leaders Initiative on Human Rights, and OHCHR.[6]

Practical, constructive guidance

46. The Guidelines do not use the peremptory word "must", but the more modest language "should". In other words, they deliberately avoid some of the most controversial doctrinal questions (such as, "are businesses legally bound by international human rights law?") that have dominated debates about business and human rights for many years. These discussions are important, and the Special Rapporteur has contributed to them elsewhere,[7] but the central objective of the Guidelines is to provide practical, constructive and specific guidance to pharmaceutical companies and other interested parties, including those who wish to monitor companies and hold them to account. The Guidelines are consistent with and complementary to the helpful analysis recently provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises (A/HRC/8/5).

Key human rights standards upon which the Guidelines are based

47. The Guidelines are based on human rights principles that are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including non-discrimination, equality, transparency, monitoring and accountability. The Guidelines are also informed by some features of the right to the highest attainable standard of health. As the Constitution of the World Health Organization affirms, "enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human

[6] See *A Guide for Integrating Human Rights into Business Management* available at www.blihr.org/.

[7] In his report at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, the Special Rapporteur expressed his opinion that it is "inconceivable that some human rights do not place legal obligations on business enterprises" (see A/61/338, para. 93).

being". The Universal Declaration of Human Rights lays the foundations for the international framework for that fundamental human right, now codified in numerous national constitutions, as well as international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Guidelines also draw from other widely accepted standards, such as instruments on medicines adopted by WHO in recent years.

V. Conclusion

48. **Since this is the Special Rapporteur's last thematic report, he takes the opportunity to make some brief observations arising from his tenure between 2002 and 2008.**

Analytical and methodological issues

49. **The right to the highest attainable standard of health is complex and extensive. It encompasses medical care and the underlying determinants of health, such as water, sanitation, non-discrimination and equality. To make sense of this complexity, the Special Rapporteur has drawn from the work of many others and refined an analytical framework for "unpacking" the right to the highest attainable standard of health, with a view to making this fundamental human right easier to grasp. This framework is employed in all of the Rapporteur's thematic and country reports.**

50. **Thematic reports apply the right-to-health framework to a range of health issues, including maternal mortality, essential medicines, water and sanitation, the skills drain, sexual and reproductive health, mental disability, the health-related Millennium Development Goals, neglected diseases, international assistance and cooperation, health systems, and others. Of course, many other right-to-health issues need urgent attention, including palliative care.**

51. **Three of the Special Rapporteur's thematic reports have looked at a major methodological question: how is it possible to check whether or not a State is progressively realizing the right to health? The Special Rapporteur's third report on indicators and benchmarks sets out a human rights-based approach to health indicators.[8] Of course, this methodology can be improved. But it is now difficult to argue that there is no way of measuring the progressive realization of the right to the highest attainable standard of health.**

52. **Another report looks at impact assessments. Any modern policymaker, unless purely driven by ideology, will wish to consider the likely human rights impact of a proposed new policy or programme. The Special Rapporteur's report to the General Assembly last year sets out a methodology for right-to-health impact assessments (A/62/214).**

53. **Another chapter in the same report begins to explore the problem of prioritization. Given finite budgets, how does a Government choose between competing right-to-health priorities?**

[8] E/CN.4/2006/48.

54. **The Special Rapporteur has also begun to explore a related problem. The obligations under international law concerning the right to health are subject to maximum available resources. While some of the Special Rapporteur's reports have begun to explore this important and difficult issue, it certainly demands more attention. Of course, all international economic, social and cultural rights are subject to maximum available resources. It would be very helpful if a meeting of experts, including economists, provided guidance on what this phrase means. This would encourage a consistent interpretation and help other Special Rapporteurs as they apply this concept in their respective mandates.**

55. **Some of the Special Rapporteur's reports have begun to explore the critical issue of participation and the right to the highest attainable standard of health. This, too, however, demands more attention.**[9]

56. **Of course, all such analytical, methodological and conceptual issues are only means to an end. The real goal is implementation of the right to the highest attainable standard of health. In this respect, the Special Rapporteur hopes that his numerous country reports will be of assistance.**

Health workers, implementation and mainstreaming

57. **The classic, long-established health professions can benefit from the newer, dynamic discipline of human rights. But this is a two-way street. The right to the highest attainable standard of health cannot be realized without the interventions and insights of health workers; it cannot be realized without the expertise of those working in medicine and public health.**[10] **It is imperative that more health workers engage with human rights (see A/HRC/4/28). Also, more human rights workers must be willing to learn about health.**

58. **As the Special Rapporteur has prepared his reports, he has listened to health experts and sought to integrate their professional advice and right-to-health considerations. His report on neglected diseases in Uganda, for example, is a blend of health and human rights. It sets out, in some detail, a right-to-health approach to neglected diseases. His pending report on maternal mortality in India will be equally operational. The result of extensive consultations with health workers, his recent report on strengthening health systems integrates health and human rights considerations (A/HRC/7/11).**

59. **The General Assembly and Human Rights Council, as a large assembly consisting mainly of diplomats and lawyers, may not always be the most effective forum to discuss the right to the highest attainable standard of health. In these circumstances, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the mandate's reports should be considered not only by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, but also the World Health Assembly and WHO Executive Board.**

60. **Over the last six years, the Special Rapporteur has enjoyed excellent cooperation with a number of WHO staff members on a range of policy and operational issues, for which he is extremely grateful. However, to the best of**

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[9] Later this year, the University of Essex will publish a monograph on participation and the right to health.

[10] Health workers include all those developing, managing, delivering, monitoring and evaluating preventive, curative and rehabilitative health in the private and public health sectors, including traditional healers.

his knowledge, neither the World Health Assembly, nor the Executive Board, have ever considered one of his reports. Despite requests, he has never met a WHO Director General since his appointment in 2002. Of course, this would not matter if the World Health Assembly, Executive Board and others were considering the right to the highest attainable standard of health in a reasonably systematic way. But the record confirms that they are not.

61. General Assembly resolution 60/251, establishing the Human Rights Council, expressly mandates the Council to "promote the effective coordination and the mainstreaming of human rights within the United Nations system". The Special Rapporteur urges all parties to take steps to mainstream human rights in their health-related national and international policymaking.

Support and resources

62. The Special Rapporteur is extremely grateful to all those who have helped and advised him since 2002. Of course, it is impossible to mention them all. He is very grateful to United Nations agencies, in particular UNFPA, UNAIDS and a number of very supportive WHO colleagues. PAHO's support has been outstanding. He is grateful to those States that have invited him to visit, as well as the World Trade Organization that he reported on during 2005, and GlaxoSmithKline that he visited in June 2008. Throughout, the support of States, particularly Brazil and New Zealand, to the mandate has been vital. Civil society support has been indispensable. He is deeply indebted to the health workers who have patiently educated him about their profession, as well as ordinary people who have shared their time, insights and experiences — some of them painful and personal.

63. He is also very grateful to a number of funders, without whose financial assistance he could not have undertaken his duties.[11] He is extremely grateful to a small team of senior researchers and interns at the Human Rights Centre, University of Essex. Without the staff supporting his work in OHCHR nothing would have been possible. The professionalism and hard work of his colleagues at the University and OHCHR has been extraordinary.

64. Although supported by many, all have respected his independence as an expert accountable to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

65. Funding for OHCHR has increased in recent years and this is very welcome indeed. But funding for special procedures remains a huge problem. What message does it send when a Special Rapporteur, with a global human rights mandate, is expected to do the job after office hours — in evenings and weekends — with the help of one very able, but overburdened, United Nations staff member? Such an arrangement is neither serious nor sustainable.

66. Nonetheless, the Special Rapporteur is very grateful to Member States for the opportunity to work with them towards the realization of one of the primary purposes of the United Nations, as set out in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, the promotion and protection of human rights for all.

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[11] The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), European Commission, UNFPA, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Ford Foundation, Open Society Institute, British Medical Association, the International Federation of Health and Human Rights Organisations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases and WHO.

Annex

Human Rights Guidelines for Pharmaceutical Companies in relation to Access to Medicines

Preamble

a. Almost 2 billion people lack access to essential medicines; improving access to existing medicines could save 10 million lives each year, 4 million of them in Africa and South-East Asia.

b. Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, such as reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, depends upon improving access to medicines.

c. One of the Millennium Development Goal targets is, "in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, (to) provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries".

d. Medical care and access to medicines are vital features of the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

e. Access to medicines depends upon effective, integrated, responsive and accessible health systems. In many countries, health systems are failing and collapsing, constituting a grave obstacle to increasing access to medicines. While a range of actors can take immediate steps to increase access to medicines, health systems must be strengthened as a matter of priority and urgency.

f. States have the primary responsibility for realizing the right to the highest attainable standard of health and increasing access to medicines.

g. In addition to States, numerous national and international actors share a responsibility to increase access to medicines.

h. As confirmed by the United Nations Global Compact, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Business Leaders Initiative on Human Rights, and many others, the private business sector has human rights responsibilities.

i. Pharmaceutical companies, including innovator, generic and biotechnology companies, have human rights responsibilities in relation to access to medicines.

j. Pharmaceutical companies also have other responsibilities, for example, a responsibility to enhance shareholder value.

k. Pharmaceutical companies are subject to several forms of internal and external monitoring and accountability; however, these mechanisms do not usually monitor, and hold a company to account, in relation to its human rights responsibilities to enhance access to medicines.

l. Pharmaceutical companies contribute in various ways to the realization of the right to the highest attainable standard of health, such as providing individuals and communities with important information about public health issues.

Enhancing access to medicines, however, has the central place in the societal mission of pharmaceutical companies. For this reason, these non-exhaustive, interrelated Guidelines focus on the human rights responsibilities of pharmaceutical companies in relation to access to medicines.

m. The human rights responsibilities of pharmaceutical companies are not confined to the right to the highest attainable standard of health. They have human rights responsibilities, for example, regarding freedom of association and conditions of work. These human rights responsibilities, however, are not addressed in the present Guidelines.

n. While most of the Guidelines address issues that are highly relevant to all pharmaceutical companies, including innovator, generic and biotechnology companies, a few of the Guidelines address issues of particular relevance to some companies within the pharmaceutical sector.

o. The present Guidelines apply to pharmaceutical companies and their subsidiaries.

p. The present Guidelines are based on human rights principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including non-discrimination, equality, transparency, monitoring and accountability. The Constitution of the World Health Organization affirms that the "enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being". This fundamental human right is codified in numerous national constitutions, as well as international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Accordingly, these Guidelines are informed by some features of the right to the highest attainable standard of health, such as the requirement that medicines are of good quality, safe and efficacious. The Guidelines also draw from other widely accepted standards, such as instruments on medicines adopted by the World Health Organization.

q. For the purposes of the present Guidelines, medicines include active pharmaceutical ingredients, diagnostic tools, vaccines, biopharmaceuticals and other related health-care technologies.

r. For the purposes of the present Guidelines, neglected diseases are defined as those diseases primarily affecting those living in poverty, especially in rural areas, in low-income countries. Sometimes called tropical or poverty-related diseases, they include, for example, leishmaniasis (kala-azar), onchocerciasis (river blindness), Chagas disease, leprosy, schistosomiasis (bilharzias), lymphatic filariasis, African trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) and dengue. Although in recent years HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria have attracted increasing attention and resources, they may also be regarded as neglected diseases.

s. The present Guidelines adopt the World Bank definition of low-income, middle-income and high-income countries.

General

1. **The company should adopt a human rights policy statement which expressly recognizes the importance of human rights generally, and the right to**

the highest attainable standard of health in particular, in relation to the strategies, policies, programmes, projects and activities of the company.

2. **The company should integrate human rights, including the right to the highest attainable standard of health, into the strategies, policies, programmes, projects and activities of the company.**

3. **The company should always comply with the national law of the State where it operates, as well as any relevant legislation of the State where it is domiciled.**

4. **The company should refrain from any conduct that will or may encourage a State to act in a way that is inconsistent with its obligations arising from national and international human rights law, including the right to the highest attainable standard of health.**

Commentary: Formal, express recognition of the importance of human rights, and the right to the highest attainable standard of health, helps to establish a firm foundation for the company's policies and activities on access to medicines (Guideline 1). Such recognition, however, is not enough: operationalization is the challenge (Guideline 2). Many of the Guidelines signal ways in which right-to-health considerations can be operationalized and integrated into the company's activities. There are numerous national and international (including regional) legal provisions that safeguard aspects of the right to the highest attainable standard of health. It is axiomatic that they must be respected, at all times, by all pharmaceutical companies, in accordance with elementary principles of corporate good governance (Guidelines 3-4).

Disadvantaged individuals, communities and populations

5. **Whenever formulating and implementing its strategies, policies, programmes, projects and activities that bear upon access to medicines, the company should give particular attention to the needs of disadvantaged individuals, communities and populations, such as children, the elderly and those living in poverty. The company should also give particular attention to the very poorest in all markets, as well as gender-related issues.**

Commentary: Equality and non-discrimination are among the most fundamental features of international human rights, including the right to the highest attainable standards of health. They are akin to the crucial health concept of equity. Equality, non-discrimination and equity have a social justice component. Accordingly, the right to the highest attainable standard of health has a particular preoccupation with disadvantaged individuals, communities and populations, including children, the elderly and those living in poverty. Like equity, the right-to-health also requires that particular attention be given to gender. All the other Guidelines must be interpreted and applied in the light of Guideline 5, which has fundamental importance.

Transparency

6. **In relation to access to medicines, the company should be as transparent as possible. There is a presumption in favour of the disclosure of information, held by the company, which relates to access to medicines. This presumption may be rebutted on limited grounds, such as respect for the confidentiality of personal health data collected during clinical trials.**

7. **In conjunction with other pharmaceutical companies, the company should agree to standard formats for the systematic disclosure of company information and data bearing upon access to medicines, thereby making it easier to evaluate the performance of one company against another, as well as the performance of the same company over time.**

8. **Either alone or in conjunction with others, the company should establish an independent body to consider disputes that may arise regarding the disclosure or otherwise of information relating to access to medicines. That body may be the monitoring and accountability mechanism referred to in Guideline 14.**

Commentary: Transparency is another cardinal principle of international human rights, including the right to the highest attainable standard of health. It is not possible to properly understand and meaningfully evaluate access to medicines policies and practices without the disclosure of key information. There is a presumption in favour of disclosure, which may be rebutted on limited grounds (Guideline 6). Commonsense confirms that the principle of transparency not only requires that information be made publicly available, it also requires that the information be made publicly available in a form that is accessible, manageable and useful (Guideline 7). An independent, trusted and informal body should be established to consider any disputes that may arise about whether or not a particular piece of information relating to access to medicines should be disclosed (Guideline 8). That body should also provide guidance on the legitimate grounds of non-disclosure. While Guidelines 6-8 have general application to access to medicines, other Guidelines apply the cardinal principle of transparency in specific contexts, such as public policy influence, advocacy and lobbying (Guidelines17-19).

Management, monitoring and accountability

9. **The company should encourage and facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement in the formulation of its policies, programmes, projects and other activities that bear upon access to medicines. In keeping with Guideline 5, this engagement should include the active and informed participation of disadvantaged individuals, communities and populations.**

10. **The company should have a publicly available policy on access to medicines setting out general and specific objectives, time frames, reporting procedures and lines of accountability.**

11. **The company should have a governance system that includes direct board-level responsibility and accountability for its access to medicines policy.**

12. **The company should have clear management systems, including quantitative targets, to implement and monitor its access-to-medicines policy.**

13. **The company should publish a comprehensive annual report, including qualitative and quantitative information, enabling an assessment of the company's policies, programmes, projects and other activities that bear upon access to medicines.**

14. **In the context of access to medicines, internal monitoring and accountability mechanisms have a vital role to play, but they should also be supplemented by a mechanism that is independent of the company. Until such a**

mechanism is established by others, the company should establish an effective, transparent, accessible and independent monitoring and accountability mechanism that:

(a) Assesses the impact of the company's strategies, policies, programmes, projects and activities on access to medicines, especially for disadvantaged individuals, communities and populations;

(b) Monitors and holds the company to account in relation to the present Guidelines.

Commentary: All human rights, including the right to the highest attainable standard of health, require effective, transparent and accessible monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The mechanisms have a variety of forms; usually a mix of mechanisms is required. While some mechanisms are internal, others are external and independent; both types are needed. Guidelines 9-13 address the issue of internal corporate monitoring and accountability regarding access to medicines. Guideline 14 addresses the issue of an external, independent monitoring and accountability mechanism regarding access to medicines.

Corruption

15. **A company should publicly adopt effective anti-corruption policies and measures, and comply with relevant national law implementing the United Nations Convention against Corruption.**

16. **In collaboration with States, the company should take all reasonable measures to address counterfeiting.**

Commentary: Corruption is a major obstacle to the enjoyment of the right to the highest attainable standard of health, including access to medicines. Those living in poverty, for example, are disproportionately harmed by corruption because they are less able to pay for private alternatives where corruption has depleted public health services. Numerous features of the right to the highest attainable standard of health, such as transparency, monitoring and accountability, help to establish an environment in which corruption can neither thrive nor survive. In short, a right-to-health policy is also an anti-corruption policy. As emphasized in the Preamble, improving access to medicines is a responsibility shared by numerous national and international actors; Guideline 16 provides one specific example of this shared responsibility in relation to counterfeiting.[12]

Public policy influence, advocacy and lobbying

17. **The company should disclose all current advocacy and lobbying positions, and related activities, at the regional, national and international levels that impact or may impact upon access to medicines.**

18. **The company should annually disclose its financial and other support to key opinion leaders, patient associations, political parties and candidates, trade associations, academic departments, research centres and others, through which it seeks to influence public policy and national, regional and**

[12] Counterfeit drugs (medicines) are defined by WHO in FAQ's on Counterfeit Drugs, 2008.

international law and practice. The disclosure should extend to amounts, beneficiaries and channels by which the support is provided.

19. **When providing any financial or other support, the company should require all recipients to publicly disclose such support on all appropriate occasions.**

Commentary: Like many other businesses, pharmaceutical companies devote considerable resources to advocacy, lobbying and related activities. While some of these activities may impact positively on access to medicines, for example, lobbying to lower taxes on medicines, other activities may impact negatively. Guidelines have already emphasized, in general terms, the central importance of transparency in relation to access to medicines (Guidelines 6-8). Guidelines 17-19 apply this general principle of transparency to the specific context of public policy influence, advocacy and lobbying.

Quality

20. **The company should manufacture medicines that comply with current World Health Organization Good Manufacturing Practice Guidelines, as well as other appropriate international regulatory requirements for quality, safety and efficacy.**

Commentary: Guideline 20 reflects the elementary right-to-health requirement that all medicines must be of good quality, safe and efficacious.

Clinical trials

21. **A company's clinical trials should observe the highest ethical and human rights standards, including non-discrimination, equality and the requirements of informed consent. This is especially vital in those States with weak regulatory frameworks.**

22. **The company should conform to the Declaration of Helsinki on Ethical Principles for Medical Research involving Human Subjects, as well as the World Health Organization Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice.**

Commentary: The right to the highest standard of health encompasses medical ethics. Guidelines 21-22 emphasize the right-to-health responsibility of pharmaceutical companies to observe the leading international standards on ethics and clinical trials. Guidelines 9-14 emphasize the importance of effective, transparent and accessible monitoring and accountability mechanisms; these mechanisms should monitor, and hold to account, pharmaceutical companies in relation to their policies and practices on clinical trials.

Neglected diseases

23. **The company should make a public commitment to contribute to research and development for neglected diseases. Also, it should either provide in-house research and development for neglected diseases, or support external research and development for neglected diseases, or both. In any event, it should publicly disclose how much it contributes to and invests in research and development for neglected diseases.**

24. **The company should consult widely with the World Health Organization, World Health Organization/Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases[13] and other relevant organizations, including leading civil society groups, with a view to enhancing its contribution to research and development for neglected diseases.**

25. **The company should engage constructively with key international and other initiatives that are searching for new, sustainable and effective approaches to accelerate and enhance research and development for neglected diseases.**

Commentary: By providing an incentive for pharmaceutical companies to invest in research and development, the intellectual property regime makes a major contribution to the discovery of new medicines that save lives and reduce suffering. Where there is no economically viable market, however, the incentive is inadequate and the regime fails to generate significant innovation. For this reason, a different approach is needed to address the vitally important right-to-health challenge of neglected or poverty related diseases. Defined in the Preamble, neglected diseases mainly afflict the poorest people in the poorest countries. The record shows that research and development has not addressed key priority health needs of low-income and middle-income countries. More specifically, research and development has given insufficient attention to neglected diseases. There is evidence, however, that some pharmaceutical companies are taking active measures to reverse this trend.[14] The right to the highest attainable standard of health not only requires that existing medicines are accessible, but also that much-needed new medicines are developed as soon as possible. Neglected diseases demand special attention because they tend to afflict the most disadvantaged (Guideline 5). Guideline 23 does not make the unreasonable demand that all companies provide in-house research and development for neglected diseases. Rather, all companies should make some contribution towards research and development for neglected diseases. Guidelines 23-25 signal other steps that companies should take to address the historic neglect of poverty-related diseases.

Patents and licensing

26. **The company should respect the right of countries to use, to the full, the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) (1994), which allow flexibility for the purpose of promoting access to medicines, including the provisions relating to compulsory licensing and parallel imports. The company should make and respect a public commitment not to lobby for more demanding protection of intellectual property interests than those required by TRIPS, such as additional limitations on compulsory licensing.**

27. **The company should respect the letter and spirit of the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health (2001) that recognizes a State's right to protect public health and promote access to medicines for all.**

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[13] UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank, WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases.

[14] See report by Dr. Mary Moran, et al., *The New Landscape of Neglected Disease Drug Development* (The Wellcome Trust, 2005).

28. **The company should not impede those States that wish to implement the World Trade Organization Decision on Implementation of paragraph 6 of the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health (2003) by issuing compulsory licences for exports to those countries, without manufacturing capacity, encompassed by the Decision.**

29. **Given that some least developed countries are exempt from World Trade Organization rules requiring granting and enforcing patents until 2016, the company should not lobby for such countries to grant or enforce patents.**

30. **As part of its access to medicines policy, the company should issue non-exclusive voluntary licences with a view to increasing access, in low-income and middle-income countries, to all medicines. The licences, which may be commercial or non-commercial, should include appropriate safeguards, for example, requiring that the medicines meet the standards on quality, safety and efficacy set out in Guideline 20. They should also include any necessary transfer of technology. The terms of the licences should be disclosed.**

31. **As a minimum, the company should consent to National Drug Regulatory Authorities using test data (i.e., the company should waive test data exclusivity) in least developed countries and also when a compulsory licence is issued in a middle-income country.**

32. **In low-income and middle-income countries, the company should not apply for patents for insignificant or trivial modifications of existing medicines.**

Commentary: The preceding Commentary recognizes the major contribution made by the intellectual property regime to the discovery of life-saving medicines. Crucially, this regime contains various "flexibilities" and other features that are designed to protect and promote access to existing medicines. Carefully constructed, they were agreed, after protracted negotiations, by the world community of States. Because they protect and promote access to existing medicines, which is a key component of the right to the highest attainable standard of health, these "flexibilities" and other features should not be limited, diminished or compromised. Some of the key "flexibilities" and other features are addressed in Guidelines 26-29. In brief, pharmaceutical companies should not seek to limit, diminish or compromise the "flexibilities" and other features of the intellectual property regime that are designed to protect and promote access to existing medicines. Voluntary licences have a vital role to play in extending access to medicines (Guideline 30). Consistent with a company's responsibility to enhance shareholder value, commercial voluntary licences are designed to generate revenue for the patent holder. The terms of the licences should include appropriate safeguards, for example, relating to the quality, safety and efficacy of the product. Non-exclusive licences are more likely to extend access than exclusive licences. Voluntary licences respect, and depend upon, the intellectual property regime. Because data exclusivity has the potential to hinder access to medicines, companies should waive such exclusivity in all appropriate cases; while Guideline 31 identifies two occasions when the company should waive data exclusivity, there will be other occasions when a waiver is appropriate as a way of enhancing access to medicines for disadvantaged individuals, communities and populations. Access to medicines may be hindered when a company applies for a patent for improvements to an existing medicine; Guideline 32 is designed to mitigate this problem in low-income and middle-income countries.

Pricing, discounting and donations

33. **When formulating and implementing its access to medicines policy, the company should consider all the arrangements at its disposal with a view to ensuring that its medicines are affordable to as many people as possible. In keeping with Guideline 5, the company should give particular attention to ensuring its medicines are accessible to disadvantaged individuals, communities and populations, including those living in poverty and the very poorest in all markets. The arrangements should include, for example, differential pricing between countries, differential pricing within countries, commercial voluntary licences, not-for-profit voluntary licences, donation programmes, and public-private partnerships.**

34. **The arrangements should take into account a country's stage of economic development, as well as the differential purchasing power of populations within a country. The same medicine, for example, may be priced and packaged differently for the private and public sectors within the same country.**

35. **The arrangements should extend to all medicines manufactured by the company, including those for non-communicable conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes.**

36. **The company should have a board-approved policy that fully conforms to the current World Health Organization Guidelines for Drug Donations.**

37. **The company should ensure that its discount and donation schemes and their delivery channels are:**

(a) **As simple as possible, e.g., the schemes should place the minimum administrative burden on the beneficiary health system;**

(b) **As inclusive as possible, e.g., the schemes should not be confined to delivery channels that, in practice, exclude disadvantaged individuals and communities.**

38. **The company should disclose:**

(a) **As much information as possible about its pricing and discounting arrangements;**

(b) **The absolute quantity and value of its drug donations;**[15]

(c) **Where possible, the number of beneficiary patients treated each year;**

(d) **The amount of any tax benefit arising from its donations.**

Commentary: While recognizing they have a responsibility to enhance shareholder value, companies also have a human rights responsibility to extend access to medicines for all, including disadvantaged individuals, communities and populations (Guideline 5). In this context, pricing has a critical role to play. Lower prices do not necessarily mean lower profits. Sometimes the goal of enhancing access to medicines coincides with commercial interests. There are numerous arrangements that may reduce prices and increase sales, some of which are mentioned in Guidelines 33 and 34. Because the lives and health of millions are at

[15] "Value" as defined in Guideline 11, World Health Organization Guidelines for Drug Donations.

stake, companies must approach such arrangements with urgency, creativity and boldness. They cannot act alone: here is another example of the shared responsibility emphasized in the Preamble. Inventive arrangements should neither be confined to a company's "flagship" products nor a narrow range of communicable diseases (Guideline 35). Although unsustainable in the long term, a carefully constructed donation programme may extend access (Guidelines 36-37). Guidelines have already emphasized, in general terms, the central importance of transparency in relation to access to medicines (Guidelines 6-8); Guideline 38 applies this general principle of transparency to the specific context of pricing, discounting and donations.

Ethical promotion and marketing

39. **The company should take effective measures to ensure that all information bearing upon the safety, efficacy and possible side effects of a medicine are easily accessible to individuals so they can make informed decisions about its possible use.**

40. **The company should have a board-approved code of conduct and policy that fully conforms to the current World Health Organization Criteria for Medicinal Drug Promotion. In the context of this code and policy, the board should receive regular reports on its promotion and marketing activities.**

41. **The company should publicly disclose its promotional and marketing policies and activities, including costs.**

Commentary: Guidelines have already emphasized, in general terms, the central importance of transparency in relation to access to medicines (Guidelines 6-8). Guidelines 39-41 apply this general principle of transparency to the specific context of ethical promotion and marketing. Promotion and marketing give rise to a wide range of access to medicines issues, such as advertising to health professionals and the general public, packaging and labelling, and information for patients. Based on ethical considerations, the World Health Organization Criteria for Medicinal Drug Promotion provides authoritative guidance on these important matters (Guideline 40).

Public-private partnerships

42. **When participating in a public-private partnership, a company should continue to conform to these Guidelines.**

43. **If a company joins a public-private partnership, it should disclose any interest it has in the partnership's decisions and activities.**

44. **So far as these Guidelines bear upon the strategies, policies, programmes, projects and activities of public-private partnerships, they shall apply equally to such partnerships.**

45. **A company that joins a public-private partnership should take all reasonable steps to ensure that the partnership fully conforms to these Guidelines.**

Commentary: Public-private partnerships can make an important contribution to enhancing access to medicines. They are subject to right-to-health considerations corresponding to those set out in these Guidelines. Where conflicts of interest may

arise, disclosure is important, consistent with the human rights requirements of transparency.

Associations of pharmaceutical companies

46. **So far as these Guidelines bear upon the strategies, policies, programmes, projects and activities of associations of pharmaceutical companies, they shall apply equally to all such associations. The Guidelines on lobbying (Guidelines 17 and 26) and financial support (Guideline 18), for example, shall apply equally to all associations of pharmaceutical companies.**

47. **A company that is a member of an association of pharmaceutical companies should take all reasonable steps to ensure that the association fully conforms to these Guidelines.**

Commentary: A company has a responsibility to ensure that its professional associations are respectful of the right-to-health considerations set out in these Guidelines; otherwise a company could use an association as a way of avoiding its human rights responsibilities.

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Promotion and protection of human rights

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the optional protocol thereto

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/170, provides an overview of the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as of 3 August 2008. The report also briefly describes (a) the progress made in implementing standards and guidelines concerning the accessibility of facilities and services of the United Nations system; (b) efforts to disseminate accessible information on the Convention and its optional protocol; and (c) efforts to promote ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

* A/63/150 and Corr.1.

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Introduction

1. The General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the optional protocol thereto in its resolution 61/106 on 13 December 2006. In its resolution 62/170, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue the progressive implementation of standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services of the United Nations system and to submit to it at its sixty-third session a report on progress made in the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

I. Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the optional protocol thereto

2. The Convention and optional protocol entered into force on 3 May 2008. Since the opening for signature of the Convention and optional protocol on 30 March 2007, 129 States and one regional integration organization (the European Community) have signed the Convention and 29 States have ratified it. Seventy-two States have signed and 18 States have ratified the optional protocol. The lists of signatories and ratifications accession are provided in the annex. Reservations were made by El Salvador, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico and Poland, and declarations were made by Egypt, Malta, the Netherlands and Belgium at the time of signature.[1]

II. Action taken with regard to the standards and guidelines concerning accessibility

3. In follow-up to resolution 62/170, three priority areas for the development of standards and guidelines concerning accessibility have been identified: information, human resources and physical facilities.

A. Information

4. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has been promoting accessible communication and information and the use of existing standards and guidelines, as well as the development of additional guidelines, in collaboration with other entities of the United Nations system.

5. The Assembly recognized the strategic importance of information and communications technology (ICT) in its resolution 62/283. The Organization-wide agreement on the future direction of ICT is discussed in the report of the Secretary-General on investing in information communications technology (A/62/793 and Corr.1). It is envisaged that the overall strategic direction and policy framework for information and communications technology will ensure Secretariat-wide compliance with accessibility requirements, including those of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). This is in line

[1] The text of the reservations and declarations are available at www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=475.

with the efforts outlined in the ICT strategy for the United Nations Secretariat to improve accessibility of information across all strategic programme areas.

6. Accessible systems are in development. Galaxy and the United Nations Official Documents System (ODS) will be replaced by Talent Management and Enterprise Content Management, which comply with the relevant accessibility standards.

7. The Department of Public Information continues to improve the accessibility of United Nations websites, in line with W3C Web accessibility standards, which are the only standards with worldwide recognition at the present time. An increasing number of United Nations system websites include several features designed to improve accessibility. The Department of Public Information has created a new, accessible website for the secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: www.un.org/disabilities. The Department of Public Information is currently finalizing Web accessibility guidelines for United Nations system websites. The implementation of the W3C guidelines benefits users with temporary or long-term disabilities, including those who are blind or have low vision, limited mobility or hearing disabilities, and those who require adjustments because of characteristics associated with ageing.

8. All new web pages created by the Department of Public Information, which is the manager of the United Nations website, already comply with web accessibility guidelines drawn up by the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative. More information from the Department of Public Information on efforts to make United Nations system websites accessible can be found at www.un.org/webaccessibility. The Department of Public Information has also developed pilot training programmes for staff responsible for website creation.

9. Other measures to improve accessibility have been undertaken throughout the United Nations system. The Department of Management has installed desktop outlets for laptop computers in Conference Rooms 1 to 8 at United Nations Headquarters and plans to install assistive listening devices and to provide materials in large print and Braille, and audio recordings. The Division for the Advancement of Women within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is in the process of implementing the web accessibility guidelines drawn up by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) on WomenWatch, the Division's electronic gateway. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) held a consultative meeting with organizations of persons with disabilities at which options for improving ESCAP web accessibility were discussed.

10. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is exploring options to improve access to information for persons with disabilities. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recently initiated a study to improve the accessibility of its website. The World Health Organization (WHO) website has been audited for accessibility and improvements have been made in line with best practice guidelines, such as the W3C standards. These improvements include the use of descriptive alternative text, the addition and use of meaningful link texts, code changes (header tags, content groupings) so that the HTML is rendering correctly for screen readers, and transcripts of podcasts to improve access for hearing impaired users.

B. Human resources

11. Despite the fact that the current United Nations human resources policy does not contain discriminatory references, the United Nations system employs a very limited number of persons with disabilities. Recent efforts to remedy that situation have focused on the recruitment and retention of staff with disabilities and on their training. To improve the recruitment of persons with disabilities by the various entities of the United Nations system, it is necessary to assess the implications of a legal and medical nature, including insurance and pension issues, as well as the necessary budgeting and modifications to staff rules and regulations.

12. The recently established Working Group on Disability of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Human Resources Network is developing a common policy statement on the employment of persons with disabilities in the United Nations workplace.

13. The policy statement will reaffirm the commitment of the United Nations system to ensuring equal opportunities and equal rights for qualified applicants for employment and staff with disabilities. It also reaffirms the aim of the Organization to create an environment that enables persons with disabilities to work effectively. To that end, each United Nations entity is requested, in collaboration with staff with disabilities and their representatives, to develop and integrate a policy on the employment of persons with disabilities into its human resources management strategy, with links to staff welfare and safe and healthy workplace initiatives.

14. Areas to be covered by the new policies include protection of rights, non-discrimination, reasonable accommodation, positive action in recruitment, selection and appointment, awareness-raising and the needs of staff and their family members with disabilities.

15. Efforts to implement standards and guidelines for the accessibility of human resources and training services of the United Nations system have included the following.

16. On the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December 2007, under the theme "Decent work", the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights made six commitments to improve the right to decent work for staff with disabilities and to introduce standards to ensure an accessible workplace for such staff. The High Commissioner committed her Office (OHCHR) to: (a) developing and launching, before 3 December 2008, an OHCHR "statement of intent" on the employment of staff with disabilities that would address recruitment, career development and work/life issues, including the situation of staff with children with disabilities; (b) develop and implement standards on accessibility in the physical environment, as well as for technology used by OHCHR; (c) develop a programme of sensitization for OHCHR staff in relation to disabilities in the workplace; (d) establish an internship programme in 2008 for interns with disabilities; (e) consult with and involve relevant organizations of persons with disabilities in the development of these commitments; and (f) review these commitments after five years.

17. UNDP established a working group on disability with a strong focus on accessibility and human resources, and in particular on the proactive recruitment of persons with disabilities. At the country office level, UNDP Venezuela initiated a

project to promote employment opportunities within the United Nations system for persons with disabilities.

18. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) adopted a number of initiatives to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, including staff or refugees, in the areas of policy, accountability, capacity-building and attitudinal change, partnership, early identification and referral systems. UNHCR has reported on the need to increase the overall capacity and improve the skills of staff with a view to their working more effectively with persons with disabilities, and to changing negative stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

19. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) initiated an in-house dialogue for a more systematic consideration of disability issues in relation to workplace diversity, human resources policy, physical accommodation, services and equipment.

20. The World Health Organization (WHO) developed a statement on ensuring decent work within the organization for qualified individuals, regardless of their disabilities or other diversity factors, such as race, sex, creed, national origin or age.

21. Within the United Nations Secretariat, in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of Military Affairs and the Police Division are considering efforts to encourage troop- and police-contributing countries to develop policies for the inclusion of uniformed personnel with disabilities. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations also reported on the need, both at Headquarters and at the mission level, for awareness-raising and training on the Convention, and for the development of improved human resources policies that respect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities.

C. Physical facilities

22. The United Nations system does not have universal standards of accessibility, but seeks to adhere to the standards and requirements of the host country. At its Headquarters, the United Nations seeks to adhere to regulations in accordance with United States federal legislation and applicable New York City building codes. Similarly, in Geneva and Vienna, for example, the facilities were constructed in compliance with the regulations of the respective host country. The practice is that renovation and construction plans are voluntarily provided to host country officials for their review and comment, and that all activities are conducted in compliance with host country regulations.

23. At United Nations Headquarters, since 1990, host country regulations have been taken into consideration in all architectural designs relating to repairs and the installation of ramps, restrooms and drinking fountains, as well as accessibility to entrances and means of egress throughout the Secretariat, General Assembly and Conference Buildings.

24. At Headquarters, the responsibility for the physical facilities lies with the Department of Management. In addition, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has been working closely with the Department of Management, including the capital master plan team, to ensure that the facilities, including those concerned by the capital master plan, are in line with the spirit and letter of the Convention.

25. One of the main goals of the capital master plan is to create a modern facility that is fully accessible, including outside spaces. Virtually all the areas that guests and office staff occupy will be fully accessible and all aspects of the renovation of Headquarters will be fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and applicable host city building code requirements. The Office of the Capital Master Plan and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs have cooperated in meeting with Americans with Disabilities Act and universal design experts to ensure that the buildings and complex will be accessible.

26. Although they are not addressed in the capital master plan, the Department of Management is also looking into ways to accommodate other potential needs of persons with disabilities. The Department of Management is planning to install assistive listening devices, large print materials in Braille and audio recordings for persons with disabilities.

27. Participants in the annual meeting of the Inter-Agency Network of Facilities Managers discussed further improvement of the United Nations facilities with regard to accessibility in March 2008. The participants represented 23 office entities, including the United Nations Secretariat, regional commissions, funds, specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions and other international organizations. In terms of United Nations common premises in the field, accessibility is being discussed by the Working Group on Common Premises of the United Nations Development Group. All guidance issued relating to the country offices has been agency-specific. The agencies have yet to jointly establish standard specifications for United Nations premises. When construction or renovation takes place, the agencies rely on the host country laws and building codes, incorporating specific needs of the United Nations. In the context of a project currently under evaluation by the Working Group on Common Premises, the need for guidance on disability access has been raised by only one United Nations country team.

28. Since 2004, at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Facility Management Unit has been conducting an annual accessibility audit on the basis of the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. As a result, slope additions were made to the United Nations Conference Centre and 18 additional accessible bathrooms were constructed.

29. To follow up on the High Commissioner's statement of commitment to decent work for staff with disabilities, OHCHR completed an accessibility audit of its premises, facilities and technology in June 2008. Two reports undertaken by and involving persons with disabilities have reviewed OHCHR from the perspective of persons with physical and sensory disabilities and recommendations have been submitted to the management for review and follow-up.

30. UNDP has requested a feasibility study of alternatives for improving accessibility to UNDP facilities. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has made its guide *Making ILO Offices accessible to Persons with Disabilities* available throughout the organization to guide renovations, layout and the choice of venues for events, among other considerations. The new global headquarters in Geneva of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) was constructed to be fully compliant with Swiss laws on access for persons with disabilities.

31. At UNHCR, a working group has been established to identify and analyse measures to improve accessibility. Some offices have already made improvements in

terms of accessibility: for example, at the country office in Guinea the building has been modified to include an accessible ramp and wider doors, and the reception and interview rooms have been moved to the ground floor. Such measures also address the needs of displaced persons with disabilities who need to access UNHCR premises for consultations and interviews.

32. UNDP is conducting a feasibility study to improve accessibility to its facilities. Several UNDP country offices are improving the accessibility of facilities and services of the United Nations system. In Bhutan, the new United Nations house will be made barrier-free to ensure accessibility. In Maldives, in consultation with other United Nations agencies, the country office premises are being redesigned to make them accessible to persons with disabilities.

33. At UNICEF, efforts have been made to implement the standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services of the United Nations system. UNICEF has initiated an in-house dialogue for a more systematic consideration of disability issues in relation to workplace diversity, human resources policy, physical accommodation, services and equipment.

34. WHO ensures accessibility to the main entry points to buildings at its premises in Geneva by installing wheelchair ramps and lifts throughout the buildings as needed; providing dedicated toilet facilities in all buildings; and constructing easily accessible parking spaces. WHO is exploring the possibility of conducting a survey of regional offices' local practices and including the results in the WHO real estate inventory database.

35. The Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization called upon member countries to strengthen their efforts to improve the implementation of the recommendations included in resolution 492 (XVI) 10 on "Accessible tourism for all", adopted by the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization in 2005. These recommendations highlight the need for information on the accessibility of tourism services and facilities and the availability of support services for persons with disabilities in tourist destinations. They also underline the need to prepare and train staff employed by tourism establishments and tourism-related services on special needs of persons with disabilities. Common accessibility requirements in tourism facilities and sites are set out in the recommendations, as well as a description of requirements for persons with disabilities in specific facilities, such as airport terminals, hotels, restaurants, museums and conference halls.

D. Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

36. The Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention was established by CEB in September 2006 as a time-bound group tasked with preparing a system-wide strategy to advance the implementation of the Convention. The group has met twice; the meetings were convened by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and OHCHR. Following the first meeting, the group adopted a joint statement of commitment to the Convention, in which its members committed themselves to promoting, protecting and ensuring within the United Nations system the explicit rights and provisions set out in the Convention and, as appropriate, to providing support to the States parties to the Convention. To that end, the members of the group agreed to draft a common strategy and action plan as the basis for coordinated

work within the United Nations system, and to support States as they ratify and implement the Convention. The strategy and action plan will reflect articles 32 and 38 of the Convention in particular. The statement of commitment identifies six areas of focus for the joint strategy and action plan: policies, programmes, capacity-building, research and access to knowledge, accessibility, and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the treaty body for the Convention).

III. Activities undertaken in support of the Convention

37. In May 2008, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with Governments and civil society, organized an event to commemorate the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, at which the international community reaffirmed its commitment to the advancement of persons with disabilities in a quest for a just and equitable society. At this event, which was opened by a representative of the President of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General said that the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its optional protocol heralded a new dawn in the fight for the well-being of people with disabilities — a struggle rooted in the fundamental principle of universal human rights, and he urged those countries that had not yet done so to consider ratification of the Convention and its optional protocol at the earliest possible date. A representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs focused on the two dimensions of the Convention — human rights and development — and on the Convention's relevance to efforts to achieve a just and equitable society for all. The Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights emphasized the importance of a coordinated response to ensure that the Convention process would bring real change and not merely maintain the status quo.

38. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs is working closely with the International Paralympic Committee and the China Disabled Persons' Federation to promote the Convention at the Paralympic Games in Beijing in September 2008. A high-level representative of the Department will attend the Paralympic Games to highlight the importance of the Convention and the work of the United Nations. Athletes at the Paralympic Games will demonstrate their support of the Convention by signing a "wall of support for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities".

39. The Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development has convened numerous regional and national conferences on disability, raising awareness of the Convention within Governments and within civil society. Throughout the past year, she has emphasized in all her meetings with Government representatives and legislators the importance of promoting and ratifying the Convention, and of harmonizing legislation, action plans and programmes.

40. In its resolution 7/9 of 25 March 2008, the Human Rights Council decided to hold an annual interactive debate on the rights of persons with disabilities, focusing on key legal measures for the ratification and effective implementation of the Convention. In that resolution, the Human Rights Council reaffirmed the need to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, called upon States to consider

signing and ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its optional protocol as a matter of priority and encouraged them to raise awareness regarding the rights of persons with disabilities. The Council also encouraged the special procedures, the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, all stakeholders in the universal periodic review, and other mechanisms of the Council, as well as the human rights treaty monitoring bodies, to take into account the rights of persons with disabilities in their work. The Council invited the High Commissioner to continue to provide adequate support for the integration of the perspectives of persons with disabilities in its work, encouraged OHCHR to continue to strengthen its partnerships with civil society organizations including organizations of persons with disabilities, and encouraged the High Commissioner to take fully into account the progressive implementation of standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services of the United Nations system. The Council also invited the Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development to continue cooperating with the Council.

41. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, OHCHR and the Inter-Parliamentary Union published *From Exclusion to Equality; Realizing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, a handbook for parliamentarians on the Convention. The editorial review board consisted of parliamentarians, academics and practitioners, many of whom are persons with disabilities. Organizations in many countries have produced unofficial versions in local languages. The handbook is intended to assist parliamentarians and others to develop mechanisms and frameworks for implementing the Convention in practice. It will serve as a useful tool for parliamentarians in promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

42. A staff member of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs represents the United Nations system on the Board of Directors of the Global Partnership for Disability and Development. The Global Partnership, a broad and inclusive network of organizations, works to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and their families. The central focus of the Global Partnership is mainstreaming the goals and objectives of the Convention in social and economic development. In this context, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs contributed to the five-year strategic plan for the Global Partnership for Disability and Development in 2008.

43. Pursuant to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 62/170 to United Nations agencies and organizations to continue to disseminate accessible information, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and OHCHR prepared frequently asked questions on the Convention and its optional protocol, as well as on the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the related answers, and made them available on their websites.

44. OHCHR sought to raise awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities by promoting the Convention as one of its four media strategies in 2008. The strategy seeks to promote the Convention, using the Web, print and film media, through interviews, promotional materials, personal stories, brochures and posters, with a focus on key events related to the Convention.

45. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs is collaborating with an organization called "No Limits Media" on its plans to launch an exhibition of photographs of persons with disabilities portraying positive images of disability.

46. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs participated in and contributed to the following conferences: the 7th World Assembly of Disabled People's International (Republic of Korea, September 2007); an international symposium on "Framing legal and human rights strategies for change: a case study of disability rights in Asia", organized by the University of Washington School of Law (Seattle, United States of America, April 2008); the African Conference on the Convention on the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities: a call for action on poverty, discrimination and lack of access, organized by Leonard Cheshire Disability under the aegis of the Economic Commission for Africa (Addis Ababa, May 2008); the Japan Association of Parliamentarians/Japan Disability Forum meeting on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Tokyo, June 2008) and "Colombia Inclusiva", organized by the Government of Colombia (Bogotá, November 2007).

47. An expert group meeting on the theme "Making it work: civil society participation in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" was organized in Madrid in November 2007 by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, OHCHR, the Government of Spain and Fundación ONCE, a non-governmental organization. The objectives of the meeting were: (a) to inform and consult civil society on the future steps of the Convention process, including the implications of civil society participation; (b) to learn lessons from civil society mechanisms that contribute to the implementation of other conventions; and (c) to establish dialogue to ensure effective civil society participation in the future implementation of the Convention. The meeting produced two outcome documents. The first is the Declaration of Madrid (A/62/654, annex), containing recommendations to Member States on priority areas of action to ensure the participation of civil society in the implementation of the Convention.

48. UNHCR is developing a set of tools for field operations on improving the protection of persons with disabilities, in order to support building the capacity of UNHCR staff, particularly with regard to increasing their knowledge of disability.

49. The United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Mine Action Team routinely advocate for treaty ratification and prepared an advocacy package on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in coordination with the Landmine Survivors Network, to assist States parties, as well as to promote ratification of the Convention. The advocacy package will also raise awareness of the importance of improving the accessibility of the facilities and services at United Nations Headquarters and in field offices.

50. The Department of Management, through the United Nations Postal Administration, issued a postage stamp series to commemorate the entry into force of the Convention.

51. OHCHR country engagement with regard to the Convention has taken place through country offices, as well as through expert advice provided from headquarters. In addition to the country activities reported on in the report to the Human Rights Council of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/7/61), the following activities are of note.

52. The OHCHR Regional Office in Bangkok organized, jointly with ILO and ESCAP, a commemorative event concerning the Convention. In Gaza, OHCHR,

together with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society, organized a seminar on raising awareness of and advocacy for the Convention, to demystify disability. In Guatemala, OHCHR organized two workshops on the Convention. In the Kyrgyz Republic, OHCHR, UNDP and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Academy, in cooperation with the Government and local civil society, organized a conference to promote awareness of the Convention organizations. The OHCHR Regional Office for Southern Africa participated in an ILO-sponsored subregional meeting on the theme "Disability legislation and decent work for persons with disabilities in Africa", focusing on monitoring by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the implementation of the Convention. In Switzerland, OHCHR attended a meeting of parliamentarians to promote signature and ratification of the Convention. In Timor-Leste, the Human Rights and Transitional Justice Section of OHCHR, in coordination with the Military Liaison Group of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste, has been monitoring respect for the rights of persons with disabilities in villages. In Uganda, OHCHR is conducting a study to prepare strategies for promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. To mark the entry into force of the Convention, OHCHR sent advocacy letters to Governments, non-governmental organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities calling for speedy ratification of the Convention.

53. An important initiative of civil society is the International Disability Alliance IDA-CRPD Forum. The Forum is a network of civil society organizations. Its purpose is to unify the voice of the disability community and it is based on the experience and expertise of the International Disability Caucus, which brought together organizations of persons with disabilities during the negotiation process of the Convention. The Forum will have a key role in assisting with the effective implementation of the Convention. The Forum is open to all civil society organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels, including organizations of persons with disabilities, in the spirit of the motto "Nothing about us, without us".

54. The following summary of activities relating to the Convention is based on inputs from 36 Governments, including States parties:

(a) Australia, through its Agency for International Development (AusAID), is developing a comprehensive new aid strategy to best meet the needs of persons with disabilities, consistent with the goals and the objectives of the Convention.

(b) China publicizes the Convention and has issued accessible online and Braille editions of the Convention. Government agencies, in collaboration with disability organizations, have conducted numerous studies and research activities.

(c) Finland is harmonizing national legislation with the Convention.

(d) Germany promotes training on the Convention and works, on the basis of the "Paris Principles",[2] with the German Institute for Human Rights and organizations of persons with disabilities.

(e) Mexico promotes activities at the regional level to increase awareness of the Convention.

[2] The Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (General Assembly resolution 48/134, annex).

(f) Morocco promotes the rights of persons with disabilities by developing legislation in line with the Convention.

(g) In line with the Convention and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the development agency of New Zealand is working towards harmonizing the approach to international cooperation to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

(h) Qatar introduced amendments to the articles of its law relating to persons with disabilities, consistent with the goals and the objectives of the Convention.

(i) Saudi Arabia is preparing a comprehensive national record of persons with disabilities and expanding home care services for persons with disabilities.

(j) As European Union Council President, Slovenia organized a European conference on the promotion and implementation of the Convention in European Union member States.

(k) The Sudan adopted the Disabled Persons Act in line with its Constitution and with the relevant regional and international agreements to which the Sudan is a party.

(l) In Thailand, laws and policies concerning the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities have been developed in line with the Convention.

Annex

List of signatories to, ratifications of and accession to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the optional protocol thereto as of 3 August 2008

A. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*	*Participant*	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Algeria	30 Mar 2007		Chile	30 Mar 2007	
Andorra	27 Apr 2007		China	30 Mar 2007	
Antigua and Barbuda	30 Mar 2007		Colombia	30 Mar 2007	
Argentina	30 Mar 2007		Comoros	26 Sep 2007	
Armenia	30 Mar 2007		Congo	30 Mar 2007	
Australia	30 Mar 2007		Costa Rica	30 Mar 2007	
Austria	30 Mar 2007		Côte d'Ivoire	7 Jun 2007	
Azerbaijan	9 Jan 2008		Croatia	30 Mar 2007	15 Aug 2007
Bahrain	25 Jun 2007		Cuba	26 Apr 2007	
Bangladesh	9 May 2007	30 Nov 2007	Cyprus	30 Mar 2007	
Barbados	19 Jul 2007		Czech Republic	30 Mar 2007	
Belgium	30 Mar 2007		Denmark	30 Mar 2007	
Benin	8 Feb 2008		Dominica	30 Mar 2007	
Bolivia	13 Aug [illegible]7		Dominican Republic	30 Mar 2007	
Brazil	30 Mar 2007		Ecuador	30 Mar 2007	3 Apr 2008
Brunei Darussalam	18 Dec 2007		Egypt	4 Apr 2007	14 Apr 2008
Bulgaria	27 Sep 2007		El Salvador	30 Mar 2007	14 Dec 2007
Burkina Faso	23 May 2007		Estonia	25 Sep 2007	
Burundi	26 Apr 2007		Ethiopia	30 Mar 2007	
Cambodia	1 Oct 2007		European Community	30 Mar 2007	
Canada	30 Mar 2007		Finland	30 Mar 2007	
Cape Verde	30 Mar 2007		France	30 Mar 2007	
Central African Republic	9 May 2007		Gabon	30 Mar 2007	1 Oct 2007

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*	*Participant*	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Germany	30 Mar 2007		Mali	15 May 2007	7 Apr 2008
Ghana	30 Mar 2007		Malta	30 Mar 2007	
Greece	2007		Mauritius	25 Sep 2007	
Guatemala	30 Mar 2007		Mexico	30 Mar 2007	17 Dec 2007
Guinea	16 May 2007	8 Feb 2008	Moldova	30 Mar 2007	
Guyana	11 Apr 2007		Montenegro	27 Sep 2007	
Honduras	30 Mar 2007	14 Apr 2008	Morocco	30 Mar 2007	
Hungary	30 Mar 2007	20 Jul 2007	Mozambique	30 Mar 2007	
Iceland	30 Mar 2007		Namibia	25 Apr 2007	4 Dec 2007
India	30 Mar 2007	1 Oct 2007	Nepal	3 Jan 2008	
Indonesia	30 Mar 2007		Netherlands	30 Mar 2007	
Ireland	30 Mar 2007		New Zealand	30 Mar 2007	
Israel	30 Mar 2007		Nicaragua	30 Mar 2007	7 Dec 2007
Italy	30 Mar 2007		Niger	30 Mar 2007	24 Jun 2008
Jamaica	30 Mar 2007		Nigeria	30 Mar 2007	
Japan	28 Sep 2007		Norway	30 Mar 2007	
Jordan	30 Mar 2007	31 Mar 2008	Oman	17 Mar 2008	
Kenya	30 Mar 2007		Panama	30 Mar 2007	7 Aug 2007
Lao People's Democratic Republic	15 Jan 2008		Paraguay	30 Mar 2007	
Lebanon	14 Jun 2007		Peru	30 Mar 2007	30 Jan 2008
Liberia	30 Mar 2007		Philippines	25 Sep 2007	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1 May 2008		Poland	30 Mar 2007	
Lithuania	30 Mar 2007		Portugal	30 Mar 2007	
Luxembourg	30 Mar 2007		Qatar	9 Jul 2007	
Madagascar	25 Sep 2007		Republic of Korea	30 Mar 2007	
Malawi	27 Sep 2007		Romania	26 Sep 2007	
Malaysia	8 Apr 2008		San Marino	30 Mar 2007	22 Feb 2008
Maldives	2 Oct 2007		Saudi Arabia		24 Jun 2008[a]

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*	*Participant*	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Senegal	25 Apr 2007		The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	30 Mar 2007	
Serbia	17 Dec 2007		Tonga	15 Nov 2007	
Seychelles	30 Mar 2007		Trinidad and Tobago	27 Sep 2007	
Sierra Leone	30 Mar 2007		Tunisia	30 Mar 2007	2 Apr 2008
Slovakia	26 Sep 2007		Turkey	30 Mar 2007	
Slovenia	30 Mar 2007	24 Apr 2008	Uganda	30 Mar 2007	
South Africa	30 Mar 2007	30 Nov 2007	United Arab Emirates	8 Feb 2008	
Spain	30 Mar 2007	3 Dec 2007	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	30 Mar 2007	
Sri Lanka	30 Mar 2007		United Republic of Tanzania	30 Mar 2007	
Sudan	30 Mar 2007		Uruguay	3 Apr 2007	
Suriname	30 Mar 2007		Vanuatu	17 May 2007	
Swaziland	25 Sep 2007		Viet Nam	22 Oct 2007	
Sweden	30 Mar 2007		Yemen	30 Mar 2007	
Syrian Arab Republic	30 Mar 2007		Zambia	9 May 2008	
Thailand	30 Mar 2007				

[a] Accession.

B. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*	*Participant*	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Algeria	30 Mar 2007		Finland	30 Mar 2007	
Andorra	27 Apr 2007		Gabon	25 Sep 2007	
Antigua and Barbuda	30 Mar 2007		Germany	30 Mar 2007	
Argentina	30 Mar 2007		Ghana	30 Mar 2007	
Armenia	30 Mar 2007		Guatemala	30 Mar 2007	
Austria	30 Mar 2007		Guinea	31 Aug 2007	8 Feb 2008
Azerbaijan	9 Jan 2008		Honduras	23 Aug 2007	
Bangladesh		12 May 2008[a]	Hungary	30 Mar 2007	20 Jul 2007
Belgium	30 Mar 2007		Iceland	30 Mar 2007	
Benin	8 Feb 2008		Italy	30 Mar 2007	
Bolivia	13 Aug 2007		Jamaica	30 Mar 2007	
Brazil	30 Mar 2007		Jordan	30 Mar 2007	
Burkina Faso	23 May 2007		Lebanon	14 Jun 2007	
Burundi	26 Apr 2007		Liberia	30 Mar 2007	
Cambodia	1 Oct 2007		Lithuania	30 Mar 2007	
Central African Republic	9 May 2007		Luxembourg	30 Mar 2007	
Chile	30 Mar 2007		Madagascar	25 Sep 2007	
Congo	30 Mar 2007		Mali	15 May 2007	7 Apr 2008
Costa Rica	30 Mar 2007		Malta	30 Mar 2007	
Côte d'Ivoire	7 Jun 2007		Mauritius	25 Sep 2007	
Croatia	30 Mar 2007	15 Aug 2007	Mexico	30 Mar 2007	17 Dec 2007
Cyprus	30 Mar 2007		Montenegro	27 Sep 2007	
Czech Republic	30 Mar 2007		Namibia	25 Apr 2007	4 Dec 2007
Dominican Republic	30 Mar 2007		Nepal	3 Jan 2008	
Ecuador	30 Mar 2007	3 Apr 2008	Niger	2 Aug 2007	24 Jun 2008
El Salvador	30 Mar 2007	14 Dec 2007	Nigeria	30 Mar 2007	

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*	*Participant*	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Panama	30 Mar 2007	7 Aug 2007	Slovakia	26 Sep 2007	
Paraguay	30 Mar 2007		Slovenia	30 Mar 2007	24 Apr 2008
Peru	30 Mar 2007	30 Jan 2008	South Africa	30 Mar 2007	30 Nov 2007
Portugal	30 Mar 2007		Spain	30 Mar 2007	3 Dec 2007
Qatar	9 Jul 2007		Swaziland	25 Sep 2007	
San Marino	30 Mar 2007	22 Feb 2008	Sweden	30 Mar 2007	
Saudi Arabia		24 Jun 2008[a]	Tunisia	30 Mar 2007	2 Apr 2008
Senegal	25 Apr 2007		Uganda	30 Mar 2007	
Serbia	17 Dec 2007		United Arab Emirates	12 Feb 2008	
Seychelles	30 Mar 2007		Yemen	11 Apr 2007	
Sierra Leone	30 Mar 2007				

[a] Accession.

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Sixty-third session
Item 67 (e) of the provisional agenda*
Promotion and protection of human rights:
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the optional protocol thereto

Report of the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

Replace the annex with the text attached.

* A/63/150 and Corr.1.

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Annex

List of signatories to, ratifications of and accessions to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the optional protocol thereto as of 3 August 2008

A. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*	*Participant*	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Algeria	30 Mar 2007		Chile	30 Mar 2007	29 Jul 2008
Andorra	27 Apr 2007		China	30 Mar 2007	1 Aug 2008
Antigua and Barbuda	30 Mar 2007		Colombia	30 Mar 2007	
Argentina	30 Mar 2007		Comoros	26 Sep 2007	
Armenia	30 Mar 2007		Congo	30 Mar 2007	
Australia	30 Mar 2007	17 Jul 2008	Costa Rica	30 Mar 2007	
Austria	30 Mar 2007		Côte d'Ivoire	7 Jun 2007	
Azerbaijan	9 Jan 2008		Croatia	30 Mar 2007	15 Aug 2007
Bahrain	25 Jun 2007		Cuba	26 Apr 2007	6 Sep 2007
Bangladesh	9 May 2007	30 Nov 2007	Cyprus	30 Mar 2007	
Barbados	19 Jul 2007		Czech Republic	30 Mar 2007	
Belgium	30 Mar 2007		Denmark	30 Mar 2007	
Benin	8 Feb 2008		Dominica	30 Mar 2007	
Bolivia	13 Aug 2007		Dominican Republic	30 Mar 2007	
Brazil	30 Mar 2007	1 Aug 2008	Ecuador	30 Mar 2007	3 Apr 2008
Brunei Darussalam	18 Dec 2007		Egypt	4 Apr 2007	14 Apr 2008
Bulgaria	27 Sep 2007		El Salvador	30 Mar 2007	14 Dec 2007
Burkina Faso	23 May 2007		Estonia	25 Sep 2007	
Burundi	26 Apr 2007		Ethiopia	30 Mar 2007	
Cambodia	1 Oct 2007		European Community	30 Mar 2007	
Canada	30 Mar 2007		Finland	30 Mar 2007	
Cape Verde	30 Mar 2007		France	30 Mar 2007	
Central African Republic	9 May 2007		Gabon	30 Mar 2007	1 Oct 2007

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*	*Participant*	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Germany	30 Mar 2007		Maldives	2 Oct 2007	
Ghana	30 Mar 2007		Mali	15 May 2007	7 Apr 2008
Greece	30 Mar 2007		Malta	30 Mar 2007	
Guatemala	30 Mar 2007		Mauritius	25 Sep 2007	
Guinea	16 May 2007	8 Feb 2008	Mexico	30 Mar 2007	17 Dec 2007
Guyana	11 Apr 2007		Moldova	30 Mar 2007	
Honduras	30 Mar 2007	14 Apr 2008	Montenegro	27 Sep 2007	
Hungary	30 Mar 2007	20 Jul 2007	Morocco	30 Mar 2007	
Iceland	30 Mar 2007		Mozambique	30 Mar 2007	
India	30 Mar 2007	1 Oct 2007	Namibia	25 Apr 2007	4 Dec 2007
Indonesia	30 Mar 2007		Nepal	3 Jan 2008	
Ireland	30 Mar 2007		Netherlands	30 Mar 2007	
Israel	30 Mar 2007		New Zealand	30 Mar 2007	
Italy	30 Mar 2007		Nicaragua	30 Mar 2007	7 Dec 2007
Jamaica	30 Mar 2007	30 Mar 2007	Niger	30 Mar 2007	24 Jun 2008
Japan	28 Sep 2007		Nigeria	30 Mar 2007	
Jordan	30 Mar 2007	31 Mar 2008	Norway	30 Mar 2007	
Kenya	30 Mar 2007	19 May 2008	Oman	17 Mar 2008	
Lao People's Democratic Republic	15 Jan 2008		Panama	30 Mar 2007	7 Aug 2007
Lebanon	14 Jun 2007		Paraguay	30 Mar 2007	
Liberia	30 Mar 2007		Peru	30 Mar 2007	30 Jan 2008
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1 May 2008		Philippines	25 Sep 2007	15 Apr 2008
Lithuania	30 Mar 2007		Poland	30 Mar 2007	
Luxembourg	30 Mar 2007		Portugal	30 Mar 2007	
Madagascar	25 Sep 2007		Qatar	9 Jul 2007	13 May 2008
Malawi	27 Sep 2007		Republic of Korea	30 Mar 2007	
Malaysia	8 Apr 2008		Romania	26 Sep 2007	

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*	*Participant*	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
San Marino	30 Mar 2007	22 Feb 2008	Thailand	30 Mar 2007	29 July 2008
Saudi Arabia		24 Jun 2008[a]	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	30 Mar 2007	
Senegal	25 Apr 2007		Tonga	15 Nov 2007	
Serbia	17 Dec 2007		Trinidad and Tobago	27 Sep 2007	
Seychelles	30 Mar 2007		Tunisia	30 Mar 2007	2 Apr 2008
Sierra Leone	30 Mar 2007		Turkey	30 Mar 2007	
Slovakia	26 Sep 2007		Uganda	30 Mar 2007	
Slovenia	30 Mar 2007	24 Apr 2008	United Arab Emirates	8 Feb 2008	
South Africa	30 Mar 2007	30 Nov 2007	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	30 Mar 2007	
Spain	30 Mar 2007	3 Dec 2007	United Republic of Tanzania	30 Mar 2007	
Sri Lanka	30 Mar 2007		Uruguay	3 Apr 2007	
Sudan	30 Mar 2007		Vanuatu	17 May 2007	
Suriname	30 Mar 2007		Viet Nam	22 Oct 2007	
Swaziland	25 Sep 2007		Yemen	30 Mar 2007	
Sweden	30 Mar 2007		Zambia	9 May 2008	
Syrian Arab Republic	30 Mar 2007				

[a] Accession.

B. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*	*Participant*	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Algeria	30 Mar 2007		Finland	30 Mar 2007	
Andorra	27 Apr 2007		Gabon	25 Sep 2007	
Antigua and Barbuda	30 Mar 2007		Germany	30 Mar 2007	
Argentina	30 Mar 2007		Ghana	30 Mar 2007	
Armenia	30 Mar 2007		Guatemala	30 Mar 2007	
Austria	30 Mar 2007		Guinea	31 Aug 2007	8 Feb 2008
Azerbaijan	9 Jan 2008		Honduras	23 Aug 2007	
Bangladesh		12 May 2008[a]	Hungary	30 Mar 2007	20 Jul 2007
Belgium	30 Mar 2007		Iceland	30 Mar 2007	
Benin	8 Feb 2008		Italy	30 Mar 2007	
Bolivia	13 Aug 2007		Jamaica	30 Mar 2007	
Brazil	30 Mar 2007	1 Aug 2008	Jordan	30 Mar 2007	
Burkina Faso	23 May 2007		Lebanon	14 Jun 2007	
Burundi	26 Apr 2007		Liberia	30 Mar 2007	
Cambodia	1 Oct 2007		Lithuania	30 Mar 2007	
Central African Republic	9 May 2007		Luxembourg	30 Mar 2007	
Chile	30 Mar 2007	29 Jul 2008	Madagascar	25 Sep 2007	
Congo	30 Mar 2007		Mali	15 May 2007	7 Apr 2008
Costa Rica	30 Mar 2007		Malta	30 Mar 2007	
Côte d'Ivoire	7 Jun 2007		Mauritius	25 Sep 2007	
Croatia	30 Mar 2007	15 Aug 2007	Mexico	30 Mar 2007	17 Dec 2007
Cyprus	30 Mar 2007		Montenegro	27 Sep 2007	
Czech Republic	30 Mar 2007		Namibia	25 Apr 2007	4 Dec 2007
Dominican Republic	30 Mar 2007		Nepal	3 Jan 2008	
Ecuador	30 Mar 2007	3 Apr 2008	Niger	2 Aug 2007	24 Jun 2008
El Salvador	30 Mar 2007	14 Dec 2007	Nigeria	30 Mar 2007	

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*	*Participant*	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Panama	30 Mar 2007	7 Aug 2007	Slovakia	26 Sep 2007	
Paraguay	30 Mar 2007		Slovenia	30 Mar 2007	24 Apr 2008
Peru	30 Mar 2007	30 Jan 2008	South Africa	30 Mar 2007	30 Nov 2007
Portugal	30 Mar 2007		Spain	30 Mar 2007	3 Dec 2007
Qatar	9 Jul 2007		Swaziland	25 Sep 2007	
San Marino	30 Mar 2007	22 Feb 2008	Sweden	30 Mar 2007	
Saudi Arabia		24 Jun 2008[a]	Tunisia	30 Mar 2007	2 Apr 2008
Senegal	25 Apr 2007		Uganda	30 Mar 2007	
Serbia	17 Dec 2007		United Arab Emirates	12 Feb 2008	
Seychelles	30 Mar 2007		Yemen	11 Apr 2007	
Sierra Leone	30 Mar 2007				

[a] Accession.